A CORDIAL FOR A Fainting Soule:

OR

Some *Essales* for the satisfaction of *doubting* wounded *Christians*, labouring under severall Burdens; Especially such as arise in Christians Spirits, From a *mistake of the grounds of Faith*: Or from a misunderstanding of the *Nature and Acts* of saving Faith.

In which severall doubts, most ordinary to Christians in the beginning of their Conversion, are resolved; The *Ground* of Christians going to Christ cleared; The *Acts* of saving Faith are discovered; with the severall *weaknesses* with which they may consist.

Being the Sum of fourteen Sermons, delivered in so many Lectures in the Chappell belonging to *Chappel-field-house in Norwich*.

With three several Tables annexed, the first containing the Cases spoken to, directly or collaterally; The second giving the Reader an account of the Contents of each Sermon; The third of the principall things contained in the Tract.

The Second Edition, corrected and enlarged.

By JOHN COLLINGS, *Master of Arts*, and one of the most unworthy *Ministers* of the Gospell in the City of *Norwich*.

Hostis noster, ad hoc in hac vita nos pascat quanto magis nos sibi rebellare conspicit, tanto amplius ex pugnare contendit, eos enim pulsare negligit quos quieto jam possidere [illegible]. Cur ita nos vero ac vehementius mutatur, quia ex ea de nostro quasi ex jure propriis [illegible] negotium. Greg. Mag. Moral. l. 23. in c. 37. Iob.

LONDON, Printed for *Richard Tomlins*, and are to be sold, at the Sun and Bible [illegible] corner. MDCLII.

TO THE
Right Honourable, the Lady
ELIZABETH, *Countess Dowager of* EXETER.

Madam!

Our *Honours* favour in accepting the first Dedication of these short Notes, hath imboldened me again to present your Ladiship with them in a little more polished dress, for what is added to them, or taken from them as they were in the first Edition, I shall refer your Ladiship to my Epistle to the Reader. The first part of these Sermons presents your Ladiship with a Christian *fearing where no feare is*, fearing to go to the Lord Jesus Christ; would not one wonder (to consider it in the gross) what it is that in the Lambe of God should make the poore Creature so shy of laying hold upon him? Christ saith, *come!* and the Spirit saith, *come!* and the Word the Gospell saith, *come!* and the souls pressing

wants ſay *go*; and notwithſtanding all theſe, the poore ſoule ſaies, *I dare not come Lord*; Chriſt ſaith, *Thoſe that come unto me I will in no wiſe caſt away.* He complaines and cries, *you would not come unto me that you might have life!* yet the ſoul ſtands quaking, and crying, *May I go? O that I knew I might go!* I have in the firſt part of theſe Sermons ſtept aſide to ſuch feareful ones, and in my Maſter's name argued the caſe with them, and have found their Arguments too light to ſtay them from their Saviour. They ſay there is *a Lion in the way.* I have endeavoured to prove, that there is *no Lion but in their own fancy*, and have endeavoured to make their rough way plaine. But (alas!) *who hath beleeved our report?* Satan is beleeved *who was a lyer from the beginning*: Chriſt cannot gaine his credit (though he be *Eternall truth.*) Lord! *draw theſe feareful ones and then they ſhall run after thee!* But I know your Ladiſhip is over theſe rough waies, and thoſe firſt Sermons will be of little more uſe to your Ladiſhip than to remember your Ladiſhip (poſſibly) of ſome former unbeliefe, (for happy is your Honour if in your going to Chriſt you eſcaped all theſe ſtumbling ſtones) that you may be more humbled, and to quicken your Honour to more thankfulneſſe, and to mind your Ladiſhip that there are ſome in the world that need your Honours prayers, to lift them over the *blocks* that Satan laies in their way to heaven; *When thou art converted* (ſaith Chriſt to *Peter*) *ſtrengthen thy Brethren;*

Brethren; prayers will help much (Madam!) The second part of these Sermons presents your Ladiship with a Christian *doubting whether he be come to the Lord Iesus Christ yea or no*; these (*Madam*!) are the μεθοδείαι τῦ Σατανᾶ, methods of Satan; First, he keeps the solue *under an awe of coming to Christ*: thus he hopes to hinder a soules *Salvation*: But if that will not do, then he endeavours to perswade the Soule that *it is not come to Christ*; thus he endeavours to hinder the souls *consolation*. I have in the latter Sermons parlyed a little with those Christians, and have perswaded them to *sit down* becaus they are at home, and to be satisfied concerning the truth of their faith, notwithstanding the various *weakness* and *imperfection* may attend it in every Act. The Lord Jesus (Madam!) had a great care of his Saints joy. *These things have I spoken unto you* (saith he) *that your joy might be full*; and it was the whole designe of his last Sermon before his Passion to secure his Disciples a joyfull chearely Spirit, *Let not your heart be troubled*, &c. *Iob*. 14. *v*. 1. Beleeving is the way to do it, therefore he addes, *Beleeve in God*! *Beleeve also in me*; and every Christian shall find that the *flux* and *reflux* of joy in his Soule will be according to the *influence of faith*, according to the *increase* or *wane* of that. According as he hath said, *Beleeve and you shall be established*: And againe, *If you will not beleeve, you shall not be established*. Joy is the exuberance of an established Spirit. It was a great peece of

Chriſts deſigned work to comfort, *Iſa.*91.1,2,3. The Lord had anointed him *to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaime liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound*, ver. 2. —— *To comfort all that mourne, to appoint unto them that mourne in Sion beauty for aſhes, the oyle of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs.* This was his Commiſſion which he opened, *Luk.*4. 18. And accordingly hath he commiſſionated us, *Iſa.*40.*v.*1. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſpeake comfortably unto her*; the readieſt way to *comfort* is to *ſettle* the Spirit. If we can but reſolve Chriſtian doubts, we *fulfill their joy.* Now amongſt doubting Chriſtians, 1. *Some doubt whether they may come*; Others, 2. *Whether they be come to the Lord Ieſus Chriſt*; the latter doubt it, Either 1. *From a miſtake of the nature and acts of faith*: Or 2. *From a miſtake of the effects of faith.* I have in this Treatiſe ſpoken to thoſe who doubt upon the two firſt accounts; For thoſe who doubt the truth of their faith from a *miſtake of the effects* of it, I have ſpoken to them in a ſecond Part, printed ſomewhat ſince, and in a third part, which is now in the Printers hands. I have in thoſe two parts but began that worke, and in thoſe I have only diſcovered the power or weakneſs of faith, in order to its conqueſt of *Carnall and ſlaviſh feares, irregular dejections, and diſquietments of Spirit, Carnall reaſonings* and *Cavillings.* Faith hath alſo a power to reſiſt and overcome *temptations.* It is my preſent work to ſhew the

power

power of faith, in order to the reſiſting and overcomming them. But I have made little progreſſe in that, making it my worke to diſcourſe at large concerning the *Nature and variety of temptations*, &c. the perfecting of that worke will aske much time, and if it pleaſeth my God to allow me health and life to go through it (poſſibly) I may ſend that part after its fellows, but by what time I know not. I have a *winding Serpent* to follow, and whither, and how far, his *traile* will lead me I cannot tell, and when I have done that, I have a *returne* to make, and an *incomprehenſible height* to take, diſcovering the infinite power in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for the ſtrengthening of his Saints; and then I have a ſecond returne to make, that I may ſhew how water may be drawn out from the Fountain, and *ſtrength* derived from the *rock*, both for the reſiſtance of *temptations* in *general*, and ſome particular *temptations* that moſt incumber Saints in their way to heaven. This (Madam!) is my next *platforme*, but *who ſhall live when God doth theſe things?* by ſuch a worm as I am. In the meane time, I humbly beg your *Honours* pardon for my preſumption in this tender of theſe poore *Meditations*, and in them the poore ſervice of a worthleſſe creature to your *Honours* ſoule, now the ſecond time. The God of Heaven fill your *Honour* with his *Conſolations*, and deliver your Ladiſhip from the *wrack* of a *wounded Spirit*, and grant to your *Honour* to ſtay out of Heaven many daies for the *glorifying* of

his name in *comforting, and building* up his people, yet to be going apace thither, and not losing the *sight* of it till you be sate downe in it. Madam! I am

Chappel-field-house
Jan. 12. 1651.

The meanest Servant of the Lord Iesus in the service of his Gospell.

JOHN COLLINGS.

To

To the Reader.

Reader,

But a word to tell thee whither thou art going, and thou shalt pass on. Thou hast here presented thee a second Edition *of fourteen Sermons Printed for thy use some few years since, the haste my friends were in to get them out of my hands then, together with the oversight of the Printer, hath occasioned some alterations, none in any thing of the Doctrine, for I know not how I should looke thee in the face if I were conscious of delivering any thing, as an* Eternall truth of God *to people at one time, and deliver the quite contrary a yeare or two after, and intitle the* Eternall God *to that too, the alterations thou wilt find are in the ordering of the* Method, *in changing the* Text *for some more apposite, in altering the* Prefaces *to the severall Sermons, in adding some* Marginall Annotations, *cutting off some* superfluous expressions, *correcting the Printers* mistakes, *leaving out something concerning the* consistency of doubtings *with true faith, and the last Sermon concerning the difference of* doubtings *in the Elect and Reprobates, (because I intend a particular discourse concerning* doubtings, *to which those pages will be more fitly added) But the most considerable* alteration *is the* interposition *of one entire Sermon, which is in number the ninth, concerning* Receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, *in order to which thou wilt find a considerable* interposition *also in Sermon 6. where thou shalt also find my grounds of doing it. It is a truth that there is a* reliance *upon the Lord Jesus Christ, in the lowest degree of true saving faith; but I think it is more fully exprest by* receiving Christ: *I have propounded my thoughts in it,* Consider *and* Judge. *There is, I confess, a new way found to heaven, which if it were as* true *and* safe *as it is* new,

would render Treatiſes of this nature uſeleſs, viz. A conſtant full perſwaſion that Chriſt is mine, and I am his, without the leaſt queſtioning or examining my title or intereſt: *I confeſs (Chriſtian!) if I could have found this way either* in the Word of God, *or the* Examples *of the* Saints (*I meane not the* ſlippery miſcalled *Saints of our Age, but) the* ſtedfaſt, cloſe-walking *Saints of former Ages, I ſhould have commended it to thee. If I durſt have been ſo bold as the* Antinomians, *to have told thee that Doubtings* argue no faith, *when our Saviour doth but ſay they argue* little faith; *I ſhould have put my Pen in my Standage, and have made a quick diſpatch of ſuch Caſes as theſe are; But it is a rule which thy experience will find true,* Nihil magis certum, quàm quod ex dubio certum eſt, *Nothing is more certaine to the ſoule than what is confirmed to it after much doubting. I know never a way to heaven but there is a* Devill *attends, and he is not tongue-tied; we have a promiſe to be* ſuccour'd in temptations, *not to be* freed from them: *Chriſtian, I wiſh thy perfection; But* Sola noſtra perfectio eſt imperfectiones noſtras agnoſcere, *It is our only perfection to acknowledge our imperfections. The Lord keep thee under a* due ſight *of thy weakneſſes, if they do make thee doubt ſometimes, bleſſed be God; there is* cure *for them in the Goſpell, it is far better for thee to live doubting (yet beleeving) though thou wanteſt* perſwaſion *to thy dying day, than to live in a* fooles paradiſe *of a falſe* perſwaſion *all thy life time, and when thou art dying doubt whether that perſwaſion were ever good yea or no. The Lord keep thee (Reader!)* ſtedfaſt *in the faith,* humble *in thine own eyes,* jealous *over thine own heart, till the time comes when thou ſhalt doubt no more, but live* by Sight *and not by* Faith. *This is the prayer of*

Chappel-field houſe, Jan. 12. 1651.

Thy poor worthleſs Servant in the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus,

JOHN COLLINGS.

A ſhort Table of thoſe ſeverall Caſes of Conſcience which in the following Treatiſe are ſpoken to more fully or Collaterally, the Letters of which are noted with an *Aſteriske*.

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Ser. IX. 14. *Whether a Chriſtian may truly relie upon Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, and yet doubt whether he doth relie or no, and not know he relies, but be ſtrongly conceited he doth not?*

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SERM. I.

SERM. I.

LUKE 5. 17.

And the Apostles said unto him, Lord increase our faith.

WHen the Jaylor fell downe at the Apostles feet, *Acts* 16. 30. and said, *What shall I doe to be saved?* The Apostle answers, *Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* When the Ruler feared, Christ saith, *Bee not afraid, only beleeve*, Mar. 5. 36. When the poore man came for mercy for his son, *Mar.* 9. 32. Christ tels him, *If hee could beleeve, all things were possible to him*: When we pray, if wee can but *believe, we shall receive*, we shall surely not fail. Many glorious things are spoken of this mother of graces, that faith seems to be the whole duty of man.

Demosthenes was askt, how many things were necessary for an Orator, he answers three; First, action, secondly, action, thirdly, action; meaning, action was more then all. And truly, if any should aske me, what

is the *vnum neceſſarium*, the one thing neceſſary for a Chriſtian, I would ſay, *faith*; if hee ſhould aske me again, I would ſay *faith*; if the third time, ſtill I ſhould ſay *beleeve*: To the firſt, *pray for faith*; to the ſecond, *vſe faith*; to the third, *grow and increaſe in faith*. Faith and beleeving, is the whole duty of a Chriſtian, in a ſafe ſence; for it ſuppoſeth humiliation, and it commandeth newneſſe of life. Preparatory qualifications are but faiths harbingers, to prepare a roome for it; and the works of ſanctification are but faiths retinue, fed from Faiths table, and accordingly maintained as Faith is more or leſſe ſtrong, and able to maintaine them. This hath made the Devill more beleaguer the Caſtle of Faith, then all the other petty holds (comparatively) that a Chriſtian maintaineth againſt him: That as the King of *Aram*, 1 *King.* 22.31. ſaid to his thirty and two Captaines over his Chariots, *Fight neither with ſmall nor great, ſave onely againſt the King of Iſrael*; ſo the Devill ſeemes to make it his great deſigne to fight, and to have given it as his ſole or chiefeſt injunction, to the Captaines of his Chariots, to all his forces, and all his inſtruments, *to fight neither with ſmall nor great, but onely againſt the King of graces the Chriſtians Faith*. Now all of Faith is, Firſt, either the Doctrine of Faith; Or ſecondly, the practice of Faith: The Devill hath muſtered his forces againſt both; firſt, againſt the Doctrine of Faith. It is a note of *Chemnitius*, that there have been more dangerous Hereſies about the Doctrine of Faith, then any one Doctrine in Chriſtian Religion: He knows dirt in the fountaine will poſſute the ſtreames. Secondly, Nor hath he leſſe, but indeed far more malice againſt the practice of Faith; he underſtands well enough, that it is not knowing and having, but acting Faith, that doth the Chriſtian good. This makes him doe what he can, to perſwade the ſoule to reſt in a falſe faith, and hinder the

the soule from beginning to act a true Faith, or darken the soules sence of Faith; or if all will not do, yet he will turne every stone to hinder the growth, and increase of Faith; that every Christian had need with the Apostles here pray, *Lord increase our faith.* The occasion of these words, is an hard Lesson, that Christ had been teaching his Disciples, *ver.* 3, 4. concerning forgiving injuries, *they must forgive foure times in a day*; upon this the Apostles say unto the *Lord, increase our Faith.* The words are a prayer, in which you may observe,

1. The Supplicants, the Apostles.
2. The Supplicated, the Lord.
3. The Supplication, *increase our Faith.*

We may consider the prayer, either in it selfe, *absolutely*, or with the former words, *relatively*; Relatively, and so wee may learn this Doctrine.

First, *That hard duties and strength to them, must bee done and got by prayer from God.* 2. Mark what they pray for, as the means to convey strength into their soules to this duty, That is *Faith*: note, 1.

Secondly, *That Faith in the soul, is that which quickens and instrumentally strengthneth the soule to difficult duties of obedience, and especially to this duty of forgiving injuries.* 2.

If we consider the words in themselves absolutely, as a prayer, we may note these things. 3.

That even the Apostles had need pray: they are not got beyond prayer, the best of Christians are under the duty of prayer. 1.

They say to the Lord, *All our prayer ought to be directed to God.* 2.

Thirdly, the prayer it selfe is, *Lord increase our faith,* for an increase of Faith; in it wee have something suggested and implyed, that is, That they were sensible their faith was weake: *The best of Christians are and* 3. 4.

ought to be sensible, as of their imperfection in all graces, so especially of the grace of faith. 2. We have something here expresst, they pray for an increase of Faith: First,
5 they pray to God [to the Lord] *It is God onely that can increase Christians Faith*: they pray for it, *The way for us to have our Faith increased from God, is to pray to him.*

6 Lastly, the Apostles pray, Lord increase our Faith. *It is the duty, not only of the weakest, but even of the strongest Christians, as to be sensible of weakness, so to labour and pray for the increase of their Faith.* I intend not to handle all these in their order, but to pick out one of them, to build a large discourse upon: I shall pitch upon the eighth.

The Apostles praying for their increase of Faith, argued their sense of the weakness and imperfection of their Faith.

Doctr. The Doctrine is this: *That as the best of Christians have weaknesse and imperfection in their Faith, and it is their nature to be sensible of it, yea and their duty too, so it is also their duty to labour and strive against it.* This I might make good from Scripture, from severall places in the severall branches.

1. They may have weakness and imperfection in their Faith, *Mat.* 6. 30. *ca.* 8. 26. *ca.* 14. 31. in all which places, Jesus Christ checks even those which were his Disciples, for their little Faith; and yet in checking them for little Faith, he acknowledgeth they had some faith. So,

2. For the second branch, it were easie to prove, that the child of God will be sensible of the weakness of its grace, especially this grace of Faith; take but one instance of it, *Mar.* 9. 24. *Lord I believe, help my unbeliefe*, and so 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 12.

And for the third Branch, that they will labour and strive against it, hee prayed, *Lord help my unbeliefe*,

Mar.

Mar. 9.24. The Apostles pray, *Lord increase our faith*; to which wee may adde that known place, *Phil.* 3. 13. *I count not my selfe that I have attained to it, but one thing I doe, I forget that which is behind, and indeavour my selfe to that which is before, &c.* Besides, the experience of the children of God is abundant proofe, for every particular. I might also give many reasons: First, why the Faith of Gods children is weak. As,

First, *Because the state of mortality is imperfect*, 1 *Cor.* 13.9,10,11,12. 1.

Secondly, *Because of the inconstant apprehensions of a gracious heart here*: It is not alwaies high water, or full Moon, in a gracious heart; the Sun will be in the eclipse sometime, and the Moone in the wane. Now we ordinarily beleeve by sight, it is an hard thing to make Faith out-run the eye, *Ye have seen* (saith Christ) *therefore you believe*, John 20. 2.

Thirdly, another case may be *the multitude of our renewing corruptions*: The bowl of Faith runs nimbly, if the ground of the soul be even, but so long as the ground that it runs on is rugged, wee must expect Faith should meet with rubs, and bee a short cast sometimes, and sometimes more home. Doubts and feares are rubs in the way of Faith, and all Christins know, that they are the creatures of mortality, and the attendants of corruption. There is a great deale of reason you see, why the Apostles Faith should be weak, *In many things we sin all, and the more we sin, the less we believe.* 3.

There is much reason too may bee given, why the weak (if true) beleever should bee sensible of his weaknesse. As,

First, *If we consider, that it is his work to be constantly laying his heart to his eye*; The workman, by laying the timber to his eye, often sees, how far it differs from the square; The Christian, by laying his heart to his eye, sees the crookednesse of it, and how much it 1.

wants, and the irregularity in the beſt Chriſtian is not ſo little, but the examining eye will diſcover it eaſily.

2. Secondly, *If we conſider, that as the beleever laies his heart to his eye often, ſo he laies the ſquare to his heart alwaies*: The Carpenters eye may deceive him, if hee thinks it doth, he laies the ſquare to it, and that mends the error of his eye; The ſquare of a Chriſtian is Gods Word, the Chriſtian layes it to his heart, conſidering how much faith that requires, and diſcovering how much diſagreement there is between his heart and that, *Pſal.* 119 105. *Thy word is a light to my feet, and a lanthern to my paths, Pſal.* 19.11. *By the judgements of the Lord David was made circumſpect.* And,

3. Thirdly, if we conſider *that the Chriſtian is not ſelfe-opinionated*: He cares not for falſe glaſſes, and is more apt to behold his graces in a diminiſhing then a multiplying glaſſe; the ſincere Chriſtian concerning himſelfe, is as ready to miſcall a mountaine a mole-hill, as the hypocrite is to miſjudge every mole-hil a mountain; almoſt as ready to miſcall his good evill, as the other to nickname his evill good.

And for the third Branch of the Doctrine, *That as it is the duty of Chriſtians to be ſenſible and groan under the defect of Faith, ſo it is their duty (and they will) not ſtand ſtill but ſtrive and pray for an increaſe of it*, Much reaſon might be given for that too: As,

1. Firſt, *From the nature of the ſpirit of God that worketh and dwelleth in them*: Faith is the ſpirits worke, 1 Cor. 12.9. Fleſh and blood never revealed it. Now the ſpirit *is a quickning ſpirit*, I Pet. 3. 18. *It is life*, Rom. 8.10.

Where there is a principle of life, there will bee growth: *It is a working ſpirit*, that phraſe wee have often, *The ſpirit which worketh in you, &c.* Now the ſpirits work is not to undo what it hath done, but to work further and more.

Se-

Secondly, if we consider *The end of the Christian in acting of all his graces*, Phil. 3.13. The Apostle expresseth it fully; Perfection is his butt, he knowes hee must draw his bow with all his strength, and his arrow to the head, if he means to reach the butt, and he shall not hit it neither. The Christians voice is, *Heb. 6.1. Let us go unto perfection.* It is the hypocrite sets himself bounds in Religion, and sayes hither will I go and no further. And to adde no more, 2.

Thirdly, *The Christian knowes, that the more he hath of Faith, the more he hath of Christ*: hee knowes that there is a depth of sweetnesse in Christ, that can never be sadomed; something more to bee understood when he understands as much as hee can of him; when the soule hath as much as its narrow hand can grasp of him, whole Christ is too big to be enclosed in mortall armes: Now the soule knows that faith is the hand must graspe that essence of sweetnesse, the arme that must claspe him, and he knowes that the longer his arme of Faith is, the more he shall graspe of him, though he shall never bee able to comprehend immeasurable Christ, *Eph.* 3.16,17,18. This makes him alwaies complain of his dwarfishnesse, that his hand of Faith is not big enough, and his arme of Faith is not long enough, he cannot get in so much of Christ into his soul as he would do; this makes him pray for an increase of Faith, and so often complain of the shortnesse of his arme, hee cannot believe as he would: This makes him say with our Apostle here, *Lord increase my Faith.* 3.

I come now to the application: and here is matter of Consolation and Exhortation.

For all Christians, especially those that are most sensible of the weaknesse of their Faith. There have been and are more dwarfs besides the Christian; Perfection is a white was never hit, the best Archers come a handfull short. It is indeed the marke at which every one 1 *Cons.*

ought

ought to levell his arrowes, but all the soules of Christians, like the arrowes of *Jonathan*, have flowne, *some over into glory, some short, some on this hand, some on that*, none hath hit the marke. Bee of good comfort Christian, weak Faith is Faith, little ones are true children of the Father, that casts none away that comes (though creeping) to him: Heaven hath room for babes as well as men. A child may pull the latch of heavens doore, and go in, and be welcome to the knee of the King of Glory, to the bosome of him, *Isa.*40.11. *Who feeds his flock like a shepherd*, and carries *the lambs in his bosome.* Jesus Christ hath his armes full of tender sucking lambs, or at least, that were so upon the earth. The youngest Christian, if he be an heir, is of age to take up his land in heaven, nonage is no bar. The Garden of God hath more slips then old stocks in it, now indeed they are become stocks, but here they were but tender slips while Christ took them up out of the land of grace and transplanted them. But,

Exhor. Secondly, It is so, that the best of Christians have but a weake Faith, in comparison of that perfection wee ought to aspire to, and that it is the duty of Christians to be sensible of it, and pray and strive against it? Let us all then look upon it as our duty; Let us pray, *Lord increase our Faith*; Let us strive after that we shall never attain to, even *perfection*, Heb.6.1.

Now here many directions might be given.

The first I will give shall be to remove those doubts and misapprehensions which hinder the growth of it, &c. From hence shall I take my rise, for a subject which with the blessing of God I do intend for some time to insist upon, to satisfie the soules of some poor Christians, in those scruples which may perplex them, touching this grace of Faith.

The removing of which, will not a little conduce to the increasing of this grace in their soules: I will begin with

with the first. And here though I spend many Sermons, I trust I shall not be tedious, having intended to make it my work, in these Lectures, to satisfie doubting Christians in cases of conscience, and to begin with those which concerne this radicall grace at which the Devill bends so much of his force and malice. And I shall first speak to such as arise from the misapprehension of the grounds of beleeving. 2. To such as arise from a mistake of the nature and acts of Faith. 3. To such as proceed from a mistake of the effects of Faith.

Therefore wouldest thou grow in Faith, remove those scruples which hinder the beginning and progresse of Faith in thy soul. Direct. 1.

There are two notes of a weake Faith, in a gracious soule.

1. *Apprehensions that it neither doth nor may beleeve.*
2. *Fears of a false Faith.*

First, *A sence of no Faith.* Many a soul doth beleeve, that perswades it selfe it neither doth nor ought to beleeve; you shall often meet with Christians, and especially in the beginning of their conversion, that will cry out, *O they cannot beleeve, nay what have they to do to beleeve?* Faith were but a presumption in their soule if they could hatch it up: Or if not so,

Secondly, *Yet you cannot make them thinke that they do believe, no, Faith and they are strangers, &c.* 2.

Now as it is in the diseases of the body, the cure is scarce wrought untill the cause bee first discovered and removed; so it is likewise in the troubles and disquietments of the soule, wee shall scarce be able to remove them out of the soules way, unlesse wee first finde how they came there, and if we can but truly understand the cause we shall easily remove the effect.

In generall, we must know these complaints are to be understood concerning the Acts of Faith. *I dare not,*

or cannot, or do not [believe] that is, apprehend and apply, and reſt upon Chriſt as my Saviour. We ſpeak not of Faith as it is an infuſed habit, and the gift of God to us, but as it is an inherent grace, and operative in us. Now then we will,

1. Enquire what the cauſes of ſuch complaints in gracious ſouls may be.
2. We will conſider, how to ſatisfie the ſoule in ſuch troubles and ſcruples.

We will firſt enquire the cauſes of their trouble that lie under an opinion that they ought not to caſt themſelves upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; no, they have no right to go to Chriſt. What is there in the Lambe of God that ſo affrights theſe poor ſoules? What is it that makes them ſo ſtartle at the name of Faith, and ſo ſhy of going to Chriſt? The cauſe is uſually,

1. *Either a miſtake in the grounds of believing, or,*
2. *A miſtake of their own condition.*

Oft-times the cauſe is a miſtake in Chriſtians of the grounds of beleeving, and ſo there is a threefold miſtake ordinary.

1. Some Chriſtians judge their preparatory qualifications to be grounds of Faith; and for want of theſe durſt not believe.
2. Others conceit ſome ſelfe-righteouſneſſe, and cleanneſſe ſhould be a ground of beleeving, and finding the quite contrary in themſelves, they are afraid to go to Chriſt.
3. Others judge their ground of beleeving ſhould be ſome knowledge of Gods hidden decrees, and becauſe they cannot ſee they are elected, they dare not go unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

2. Sometimes the cauſe is a Chriſtian miſtake of his owne condition, when a Chriſtian thinks he hath ſin'd the unpardonable ſinne, and upon this conceit he is hinder'd from going to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

I.

I will begin with the firſt of theſe.

Some poor ſoules ſtartle at comming to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and are afraid to lay hold upon the promiſe, becauſe they want the encouragement of a broken heart for ſinne: they cannot thinke that their ſoule was ever yet enough humbled for ſinne: they doe not onely rightly conceive that the humbled broken ſoule is the ſubject of Faith; but they conceive their humiliation to be a ground of their faith, and their warrant and encouragement to goe to Chriſt by Faith, yea and ſuch a meaſure of humiliation too. Hence when you call upon them to believe, they tell you,

Alas! we believe? Gods juſtice proceedeth according to method. Firſt, he uſeth to pull downe, then to exalt; firſt to caſt to Hell, then to lift to Heaven. Alas! I was never yet enough humbled, I never ſaw hell yet enough, were my heart enough wounded, then I might go for healing.

Now, for the removing of this obſtacle of faith in a ſoule, two things muſt be enquired into.

1. Whether humiliation goeth before Faith, yea or no.

2. If it doth, what may comfort a ſoule under this affliction of ſpirit, and helpe it over this block; and encourage it to go to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

For the ground of my more particular diſcourſe upon theſe two ſubjects, you may pleaſe to caſt your eye upon that place of Scripture,

Mat. 21. 32. —— *And you, when you had ſeen it repented not afterward that you might believe.*

Now for this weighty queſtion, *Whether Humiliation goeth before Faith in the ſoule or no.*

It is a queſtion variouſly toſſed, and determined, underſtood, and concluded in theſe times, in which God hath caſt our lot; ſome utterly denying any ſuch work, ſome too eagerly contending for meaſure, ſome limi-

ting Gods dealings, others misinterpreting, if not wilfully mistaking the tearms. It will not therefore I trust be a lost labour, first, to enquire the truth of that question, which is ordinarily thus termed.

Quest. *Whether Faith goeth before Repentance, or Repentance before Faith.*

Now for the fuller determination of it, I shall first explane the termes, Then conclude the truth, and prove it by Scripture and Reason, And lastly, answer those Objections ordinarily made against it.

First, I will spend a little time to open the termes, which (when rightly explaned) I am confident will put the question out of question, to those Christians that have any experience of the Lords dealings: for the ambiguity of every term, hath only darkned the clearnesse of this truth.

1. First, let us understand what is meant by *Faith*, both in the kinde, and in the act. There are divers kindes, and divers acts of Faith. There is an historicall Faith, which consists onely in the knowledge and assent to the truth of an History, There is a Faith of miracles, There is a temporary Faith, and there is a true justifying Faith. The question is onely to be understood of the latter, which hath also severall Acts. First, Assent: Secondly, Relyance: Thirdly, Perswasion. The question is to be understood of the second Act, *Whether God gives the soule power, comfortably and truly, to rely upon Christ, and the promises for salvation, before hee hath wrought Repentance in the soule.*

2. Secondly, the term *Repentance*, is subject to ambiguity too. Repentance is sometimes taken largely for the whole work of conversion, and so godly sorrow is an effect of it; sometimes strictly; and when wee speake of repentance in the question, wee only understand the first parts of it, consisting in conviction, contrition, and humi-

humiliation, by which the soul is carried out into a loathing of it self, both for it's sins, and in it's righteousness: And the question is, *Whether God doth not work in a soul, a sorrow of heart and loathing of it self for sin, before the soul hath power to rest upon Christ for salvation, and rely upon him as it's Saviour.*

Lastly, we must safely understand what is also meant by *going before*: First, we do not understand [by going before] *a precedency in Gods hidden operation*; he at once infuseth the habits of grace into the soul: But secondly, by going before, we understand *a going before in a gracious Act*, and *in a comfortable apprehension.* Neither farther is the question to be understood, as if we thought Humiliation went before Faith, as a *work wrought by our own strength.* We acknowledge Humiliation to be *a work of Gods special grace in the soul.* And the question is plainly thus, 3.

Whether God ordinarily gives a poor soul power to act Faith, by relying upon Christ, and the promises of life and salvation, before, in some measure, he hath brought the soul to be sensible of it's lost and undone condition?

We say he doth not.

We will grant to our Brethren that are unsatisfied concerning this truth,

First, *That a man must beleeve, before he can mourn:* But how? not by any saving act of justifying Faith. He must beleeve there is a sin pardoning Saviour, that hath fulness and freeness of mercy, and enough in his fulness for him; and that, though he hath sinned, yet there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Then *he puts his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.* 1.

Secondly, we will easily grant, *that a man must have saving and justifying Faith, before the work of repentance and humiliation will be perfect in his soul:* As we maintain it to be a precedent work, so we deny it not to be a subsequent effect. 2.

3. Thirdly, we will grant, that *it is not a work to be done by our own ſtrength*, it is Gods work, onely our diſpute is concerning Gods uſuall order in working. The ſame ſpirit that works a power in the ſoul of dependence upon Chriſt, takes alſo *away the heart of ſtone, and gives an heart of fleſh.*

4. Fourthly, we will grant, *that the habits of theſe graces are both together in the ſoul.* We only queſtion which God gives the ſoul power to act firſt.

5. Fiftly, *We diſpute not concerning the meaſure, but concerning the thing.* We do not queſtion, whether the ſoul muſt be thus far, or thus much, or thus long humbled, before God will give it power to act Faith, by a comfortable reliance on Chriſt. We only ſay it muſt be humbled.

6. Sixtly, *We do not limit the workings of God, and ſay it is ſo neceſſary on Gods part, that he cannot give the ſoul power comfortably to apply Chriſt and the promiſes: but we ſay, it is not his uſuall courſe and ordinary way of diſpenſing grace, to do it.* Yet his dealings are various, he works not alike to all; he may, and ſomtimes doth go out of his beaten road. The queſtion is not concerning a neceſſity on Gods part, but only concerning a neceſſity on our part; not concerning his miraculous power, but his gracious will; nor concerning any extraordinary operation, but concerning his ordinary way of diſpenſations. This is the queſtion truly ſtated, which I ſhall endeavour to maintain as a truth of God, in this following poſition.

The queſtion truly ſtated. The Negative part maintained.

That God in his ordinary way of diſpenſations of ſpeciall Grace, doth not give a poor ſoul power to apprehend Chriſt, as it's Saviour, and accordingly to reſt and rely upon him for ſalvation, before in ſome meaſure or other he hath brought ſuch a ſoul to be ſenſible of it's low condition by Nature, and humbled it for it's going aſtray from him.

This

This I ſhall labour to make good, From Reaſon, Scripture, and Experience; and clear from thoſe Objections, and Arguments, brought againſt it.

Firſt, *The ſoul cannot come in to Chriſt, till it be gone in ſome meaſure out of it ſelf, nor can the ſoul know that Chriſt is come into it, till it knows it is gone out of it ſelf.* The reaſon of the latter is plain, for it is impoſſible the ſoul ſhould know that to be, which cannot be. But Chriſt cannot come into a full ſoul. Now the ſoul is not gone out of it ſelf, nor will it go out of it ſelf, till it ſee the danger of continuing in it ſelf; this danger works fear, this fear ſorrow, and this ſorrow is humiliation.

2. Secondly, *Chriſt will onely come into ſuch a ſoul, and give ſuch a ſoul power to reſt, and rely upon, and comfortably to apprehend him, as will prize him. But till the ſoul be humbled, it will never prize Chriſt.* For the firſt, that Chriſt will onely come into ſuch a ſoul as hungers and thirſts after him, it is plain by the many promiſes made to ſuch. But that ſoul that is not emptied of it ſelf; it is impoſſible but it ſhould loath Chriſt, according to that of the wiſe man, *Prov.* 27.7. *The full ſoul loatheth the honey comb.* The Apoſtle ſaith, *To you that beleeve he is precious.* If Chriſt be not precious to the ſoul, the ſoul doth not, will not, cannot, beleeve in him. Now ſo long as ſin is ſweet, and luſt ſweet, how ſhall Chriſt be ſweet to the ſoul? Is Chriſt and ſin both of a taſte, think we? *What fellowſhip hath light with darkneſs?* (ſaith the Apoſtle) If Chriſt be precious to them that beleeve, then certainly ſin muſt be bitter to them that beleeve, if light and darkneſs be contrary as the Apoſtle ſpeaks. But Chriſt is precious to them that believe.

3. Thirdly, *That ſoul can never be willing to reſt upon Chriſt, that is not willing to leave ſin, for ſin and Chriſt are contrary*: and it is impoſſible for a man to pleaſe his luſts and Chriſt too, *You cannot ſerve God and mammon.* Now it is impoſſible that the ſoul ever ſhould leave ſin

(which

(which is na turall unto it) and imbrace Christ, (whose goodness and sweetness somthing more then nature, more then flesh and blood must reveal) before it be convinced, that sin is vile and bitter. A reasonable creature is acted by reasonable principles. *Nabal* could say, *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not what they be,* *Who is* David? *and who is the son of* Jesse? (saith he) The fig-tree in *Jothams* parable saith, *Shall I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit? and go to be promoted over the trees.* So saith a poor soul when it is proud, who is Christ? and who is the Son of God that I should leave all? Sacrifice my lust and my corruptions unto him? What! (saith the proud sinner) shall I forsake my sweet lust and sweet corruptions, to yield to Christ? The soul must be convinced that sin is evil, yea, and the greatest evil, or it will never imbrace good. Now it is impossible that the soul should be really convinced, that sin is the greatest evill, and God the greatest good; but the soul will be grieved, that it hath forsaken the fountain of living waters, the greatest good, to cleave to the greatest of evils. But why should I dive into the dispensations of God, by the bucket of reason? Let us see what Scripture and experiences of the Saints of God, recorded in Scripture, tell us, *Matthew* 21. 32. * *And ye when you had seen it, repented not afterward that you might beleeve*: A learned and pious commentator [*Zuinglius*] hath this note upon this Text, *Grace and mercy exhibited to the world in Christ, is not esteemed by those who do not feel their sins and grieve for them.* Christ complains in the Text, that they would not repent that they might beleeve, not that they would not beleeve that they might repent. Will you know *to whom the promises are made, for whom Christ comes,* and *to whom he comes. He came*

to

* *Porro ex eo quod Christus dicet* οὐδὲ μετεμελήθητε ὕστερον τοῦ πιστεῦσαι *quidam colligunt fidere non esse pœnitentiæ partem sed ejus consequens, sciendum vero per* μεταμέλειαν *hoc loco non intelligi* ὅλην *totum opus conversionis, sed* μερικῶς *priorem pœnitentiæ partem, contritionem scilicet, quæ omnino requiritur antequam fide Christi beneficia in verbo Evangelii oblata possumus apprehendere. vid.* Gerard. Harm. Roterodami, c. 151. col. 221. a.

to seek that which was lost. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He is a Physitian, and he tells us, *The whole need not the Physitian, but the sick.* He hath told you, that *He fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away.* He hath pronounced them *Blessed that mourn, for they shall be comforted,* that are *poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God;* that *Go out weeping, and carrying precious seed, for they shall return rejoycing, and bring their sheaves with them.* Now certainly, if Christ Jesus only came into the world for such, and none can have any assurance that Christ came to save him, till he hath disclamed his own righteousnes, and is convinced he is a miserable lost creature; Surely then they cannot beleeve before, for Faith is the uniting grace that knits the soul to Jesus Christ.

Isa. 55. 1. Mat. 5. 3, 4, 6. & 11. 28. Rev. 21. 6. Mat 9. 12. Luk. 19. 10. & 15. 4, 6. Mat. 15. 24. Psal. 126. 6.

Secondly, *If the promises onely belong to such as hunger and thirst, as are weary and heavy laden, and do not belong to them before they are so, then certainly they cannot beleeve before they are weary and heavy laden.* For the same instant that the soul beleeves, and is married to Christ, the same instant are the promises intailed to the soul, being it's proper jointure, *Gal.* 3. 22. *Eph.* 1. 13.

Thirdly, *If the blessing onely belong to such, surely they must be such before they can act Faith, or else a beleever may be in the state of condemnation, and under the curse. But to such is the blessing pronounced,* Matth. 5. 3, 4, 6.

Infinite Arguments might be drawn from Scripture: Shall we see a little experience. Let us search out Gods ordinary dealings: to whom hath he revealed himself in any comfortable apprehension? what beleevers can we finde in Scripture, who in coming to Christ had not their feet dipt in bitter waters? Shall we take that troop of converts at *Peters* Sermon? *Act.* 2. 37. *They were pricked in their heart, and said unto* Peter *and to the rest of*

V. Brentii hom. ad loc.

of the Apostles, Men, and brethren, what shall we do? O lost undone creatures? what shall we do? *Act.* 16.29. The Jaylor came *trembling before* Paul *and* Silas, *and fell down at their feet, and said, sirs! what must I do to be saved.* Take the great convert *Paul, Act* 9. what astonishing sorrow was he swallowed up in? he was even humbled to the grave before you read of his Faith: Let every Christian examine his own experience, whether ever he should have received, or prized Christ, if he had not first been strucken with the sence of his own misery. Enough hath been said for it, let us hear a little what can be said against it.

1. Obj. *No man will be humbled except he beleeve; what shall make me run to God and mourn, except I beleeve he will pardon?*

Anſ. We do not dispute of any Faith, but a justifying Faith. To beleeve, and be perswaded I may be pardoned, is not a distinguishing act of a justifying Faith, this was granted before; 'tis one thing to beleeve I may be pardoned, so may an hypocrite, 'Tis another thing to beleeve I am pardoned, or to rely on Christ for pardon, this is proper to a justified person, nor can he beleeve he is pardoned till he is humbled.

2. Obj. *Repentance is the effect of Faith, now the cause must always go before the effect?*

Anſ. We distinguished before of Repentance: Repentance hath two parts, The aversion of the soul from sin, and the conversion of the soul to God; the latter part of it is only an effect of Faith, the former part of it, the turning of the soul from sin, is also an effect, but not only an effect, it is begun before Faith though it be not ended till our life be at an end. Secondly, The turning of the soul from sin, and the imbitt'ring sin to the soul, is an effect of Faith, or rather a consequent of Faith, *viz.* a generall common Faith in the beginning, but not always a consequent of saving justifying Faith.

3. Obj.

3. Obj. *Chriſt muſt work this humiliation, or it is good for nothing: now if Chriſt be in the ſoule working humiliation, then there is Faith: Therefore Faith muſt go before humiliation.*

Anſw. Firſt, though Chriſt work this humiliation in the ſoule, yet it doth not follow that Chriſt is in the ſoule; for it may bee a worke of common grace, and Chriſt is not in every ſoule upon which his common grace works. But ſecondly, to anſwer more fully, I am of the minde of Maſter *Shepherd*, and Maſter *Hooker*, that although there be an humiliation which is indeed the worke of common grace, which an hypocrite may have, yet there is an humiliation which is the worke of ſpeciall grace, and that this likewiſe precedes the exerciſe of Faith: And although it is true, that Chriſt cannot be in the ſoule, but in the ſame inſtant the ſoule is in Chriſt, for Faith is the matriage grace, yet it doth not follow, that the ſoule is enabled by an act of Faith to apply Chriſt to it ſelfe, aſſoon as Chriſt is in the ſoul, and the habit of Faith is infuſed into the ſoul; and therefore the queſtion is ſtated, not concerning the habit of Faith, but concerning the act of Faith; *viz.* Whether God gives the ſoule power to receive, relie upon, and apply Chriſt, or receive any comfortable apprehenſions of Chriſt, and the ſoule in reſpect of us (who can onely judge of the habit by the act) cannot bee ſaid to have Faith, before it hath acted humiliation or repentance: The queſtion is not which the ſoule muſt have firſt, in reſpect of Gods gift, but which it acts firſt for our apprehenſion.

4. Obj. *The preaching of this puts ſouls upon deſpair, and hinders Faith, they do not believe, becauſe they cannot find that they are ſo humbled as God requires.*

Anſw. 1. The Sun muſt not be hid, becauſe it hurts ſore eyes: What is the truth of God muſt not bee concealed,

ceased, because wicked men and seducers grow worse and worse.

Secondly, No soul that is elected can despaire, if God hath given them to Christ, the Devill shall never pluck them out of his hand; the word must be preached, though to some it must prove *the savour of death unto death: To the Gentiles foolishness.*

Thirdly, We do not say, they must repent to such and such a degree, mourn so many teares; wee dispute not how much sorrow there must bee, but maintaine there must be some.

Fourthly, True sorrow ought not to hinder Faith, for the end of it is onely to bring the soule to be willing to exercise the grace of Faith, by comming to Christ, resting and relying upon him for salvation, &c.

5. Obj. *But God works not his acts of speciall grace after the manner of men, he works them together, therefore faith and repentance are together wrought.*

Answ. Wee dispute not how God works them, but how the soule acts them, not which is in the soule first, but which appeares out of the soule first. *Iacob* and *Esau* may be twins, and in their mothers womb together, but shall it therefore follow that they shall come out together? may not *Esau* put out his hand before *Iacob*, and bee seen first by the mother and world too?

6. Obj. *But this is to take away free grace, to say God will not save a poore creature before it be thus and thus humbled.*

Answ. 1. It is not to take away the freenesse of grace; but to teach men to take heed, that they doe not turn the grace of God into wantonnesse; it does not destroy free grace, to enjoyn qualifications and conditions of Gods own making.

Secondly, You may as well say it destroyes free grace, to say, none shall be saved but those that believe, which is the expresse language of Scripture, *He that beleeveth not is damned already.*

Third-

Thirdly, Free grace is established hereby: For, 1. Is it not free grace to give a soule Christ, if for its sins it will but mourn and be humbled and beleeve? Is it not a free gift to give a Kingdome unto me, upon condition I will throw away a knife, with which I was about to cut my own throat? 2. We do not say, that this humiliation and precedent sorrow, doth deserve any such free grace for the performance of the action, therefore the grace is still free. 3. Wee say, that free grace works this humiliation, a man can as well break a rocke, as break his own heart, without the worke of this powerfull spirit, and the spirits operations are free, even like the winde that blows where it listeth, *John* 3.8. Wee exalt free grace, and make it yet more free; onely wee would not have men turne the grace of God into wantonnesse to their owne confusion; and therefore their vaine objection, that this brings us again under the covenant of works, (*do this and ye shall live*) falls in pieces of it selfe; for we neither hold that it is in the power of any creature to do this, to break his heart and mourne for sin, nor yet that any shall merit any salvation by doing of it: We abhor that doctrine of merits, that God justifies either for any works of grace acted of our own, or for the merit of any graces which he hath infused into us.

7. Obj. *But when the Jaylor asked* Paul, *what shall I do to be saved? he doth not say, mourn and be saved, or fast and pray and bee saved, but beleeve and be saved; and when we read of the conversion of* Lydia, *wee doe not read, that shee had any such humiliation as these Legalists talk of, the text only saies, that God opened the heart of* Lydia.

Answ. 1. To that of the Jaylor, it is true, that *Paul* doth not say, mourn and bee saved, &c. *Paul* had learned more wisdome then to afflict the afflicted; the text saies, *Hee came trembling and fell at the Apostles feet.*

Now the Apostle seeing him thus amazed with terrour, bids him *beleeve*, and though he knew not what to do, yet he might be saved; and how this proves that there is no need of humiliation, let the discreet reader judge, because when the Jaylor was so terrified that hee was ready to dy, *Paul* doth not bid him still be humbled, but beleeve, therefore there is no need of humiliation. It is plain out of the Text, that his humiliation although it was sudden and short, yet it was strong: First, It made him tremble and fall downe at the Apostles feet: Secondly, it wrought fully to its appointed end, to beat the sinner out of himselfe, Sirs! saith hee, *What shall I do to be saved?* I know not what to do, is implyed, for if he had known what to do, he would never have askt, *what shall I do?*

Obj. *But some will say, his trembling and falling down, was for fear the prisoners were gone.*

Answ. That is cleared out of the Text: *Paul* had cried unto him, *Do thy selfe no harm, for we are all here*, after all this commeth his trembling, and crying, *what shall I do?* But secondly, wee may shape another answer to it, *Paul* saith to the Jaylour, only *beleeve and thou shalt be saved*; beleeving doth here include humiliation, *Faith is an act of an humbled soule*, and no soule will or can beleeve, that hath not been truly humbled; therefore the great hurt that those do, that preach down humiliation under a pretence of preaching up Faith, is dealing too deceitfully with peoples soules: First, *Preaching only Faith*, Secondly, *Perswading them that a sinner as a sinner, drunkard, whoremonger, &c. is the subject of Faith*, and not a sinner as an humbled sinner. For the example of *Lydia* and the Eunuch, which is all, that there is any pretence to boast of; Wee answer,

First, *That God opened her heart without any knocking, is easier for us to deny then for them to prove.*

Se-

O admirandum Metamorphosin, &c. v. *Brent. in Loc. Divinus etiam horror occupavit non magis ex corporis periculo quam animæ. Lorinus. ad Loc. Clarius apparet non evanido dei timore fuisse concussum duntaxat: sed verè humiliatum, &c. Calv. ad Loc.*

Secondly, (saith Master *Shepherd*) "*These were examples of soules converted unto God before, who did beleeve in the Messias, but did not know that this Jesus was the Messias, which they soon did when the Lord sent the means to reveale Christ, so that it doth not follow she had never sorrowed because shee did not then sorrow.* vid. Shepherd, Sound beleever, *p.* 54.

Thirdly, "*In examples recorded in Scripture* (saith "*he*) *of Gods converting grace, do not think they had no sorrow for sin, because it is not set downe in all places, and quoteth,* 1 Tim. 1. 13, 14. Paul *was a Persecutor, but the Lord received him to mercy, doth it follow therefore he was received without humiliation? see the contrary,* Act. 9.

Fourthly, *Gods workes are not alwaies alike* in all; therefore in stating the question, I put in (*in Gods ordinary way of dispensations*) *Elijah* went to heaven in a fiery chariot, but every one must not look to bee coacht thither: *See Mr* Shepherds *eight rules, concerning this, in his Sound beleever, à p.* 48. *ad pag.* 57.

And now I leave every Christian Reader to determine, by Reason, Scripture, and his own experience,

Whether Faith goes before Repentance (*or sorrow for sin*) *or whether that goes before Faith.*

very good. J.S.T.
1835

SERM.

SERM. II.

MAT. 21. 32.

And you when you had seen it repented not afterward that you might beleeve.

Cap. 2.

The way of comforting a soule under that trouble of conscience, I am not enough humbled, &c.

THe last day you may remember, I discust the question, Whether humiliation goes before Faith, or no: which being premised, I shall come now to speak something by way of satisfaction to such soules, as labour under this perplexity of spirit.

Ah! (saith a Christian) *I cannot beleeve, I dare not rest my soule upon Christ, nor upon the promises. Alas! I was never yet sufficiently humbled, were my heart broken enough, then I might be bound up by resting upon the promises. Would God lay me low enough, then I might hope to be exalted; but would you have such an hard flinty-hearted wretch as I, think I beleeve? what one that hath such a proud stiffe-neck? How is it possible, that I should*

should have any ground of Faith? Faith (they say) is a flower, that growes no where but just upon the brinke of the lake that burnes with fire and brimstone, it must bee bottomed upon the sense and pain of a lost condition; the way to be found is to bee lost, could I bee weary and heavy loaden once, I might think to be eased by Faith.

This is the sad affliction that many a good but sadded poor soule groans under. Now for my more methodicall proceedings in speaking something to the satisfaction of poor soules, groaning under this trouble of spirit, I will first speak a word by way of premise; then I will offer some considerations to comfort a soule under such a perplexity and distresse of spirit; Lastly, I shall speake something by way of direction and caution.

For the first of these by way of Premise, We use to say, there is no errour but hath some truth in it; no ore but hath something of gold; as no field of wheat but hath some tares, nor scarce a field of tares but there is some ear or two of wheat: so it is in this complaint of the soule, here is something of truth, as well as something of mistake, upon what the complaint is grounded; that therefore no soule might presume from what I shall speak by and by, not to oile up a presumptuous soule, but to establish a fainting soule, Let mee premise, *Premise.*

First, *That it is a truth, and that which must stand if all the world be found liars to it, That God seldome or never gives the soule power to apprehend and apply Jesus Christ, and truly to rest upon him, before that hee hath first of all shewed the soule its lost and undone condition.* 1.

God makes humiliation to act first in the soule, in regard of our sight, and hence are the promises made, not to sinners as sinners, but to sinners as humbled sinners. I mean, that God hath humbled and brought low. I proved this sufficiently the last time. Christ came *to seek, and to save that which was lost:* not to *call the righte-*

nor but ſinners to repentance. I ſay this is a truth, and we muſt grant it, yea, and we muſt grant too, that it is according to the ordinary diſpenſations of his grace; and if any come to heaven another way, it is beyond Gods ordinary courſe of dealing with ſinners; for this is his uſuall courſe, firſt, to throw down to hell, then to lift up to heaven, and a rule muſt not be caſt away for one exception, nor a ſummer made with one ſwallow. And therefore let no ſoule preſume, and ſay, well I can beleeve and reſt upon Chriſt, and yet I never was humbled; without queſtion there is a falſe applying and a falſe reſting upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and there are ſome that pretend they reſt upon Jeſus Chriſt, to whom Chriſt will bee as a bruiſed reed, and as a broken ſtaffe another day: See it plain, *Mat.* 7. 20, 21. But on the contrary, there may bee and is a great miſtake upon this truth in troubled and fainting ſoules: And therefore I ſhall in the next place apply my ſelfe to them, to offer ſomething by way of conſolation to them, to ſupport and eſtabliſh them, and by way of ſuccour to them, to ſtrengthen them againſt this temptation of Satan. For Faith is the radicall and fundamentall grace of the ſoul, and as he ſaid to his Souldiers, *Fight not againſt either ſmall or great, but only againſt the King of Iſrael:* (Hee knew if hee were overthrown, his army would quickly be routed) So ſaith the Devill, if I can but overthrow his faith, and ſtave him off from the promiſes, I ſhall eaſily overthrow his ſoule; *Hee that beleeveth not is condemned alreadᵉ*; but if he gets that caſtle, he is ſafe: therefore I ſay, to throw the Devils ſnares out of the way, I ſhall offer ſomething to ſoules whoſe complaint is this, *O I cannot, I dare not beleeve*, I have not been humbled enough, &c.

1. Firſt, *Be comforted, knowing that although God hath every where called for humiliation, and ſorrow of heart for ſin, yet he hath no where ſet a meaſure for it.* The pro-

promises are not made to sinners as sinners, (as Antinomians, and Libertines, tell us) they must make us a new Bible before they will shew us any such promises; but it is as true on the contrary, that they are not made to sinners just thus far, and thus deeply humbled. That there must be some, God hath revealed that in his word: but for the measure of it, God will have that to order and dispose as he pleaseth. Be comforted (Christian) that never man was damned for degrees of grace, for want of grace many a soul hath perished, but for degrees of grace never soul was yet in danger. Mustard-seed Faith is as much saving Faith, as the bulwark-Faith of assurance. God holds his bottle, as well to those eyes that from a sincere heart, drop one tear, this to day, and another to morrow, as for those that make their heads fountains of tears, and their eyes rivers of water, *Zac.* 4. 10. *Who hath despised the day of small things?* Do you remember Christ gathered up the fragments of the bread, which he had created, the least of thy tears is a christall drop, if from the sincerity of the heart, the very *minimum quod sic*, the least of a penitent: Why wilt thou make a block in thy own way, and throw a bone in thy own dish? Why wilt thou set God a bound, as if he could not or would not save thee, till thy sorrows flood had come up to such a land-mark, when God hath set thee no bound, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further?*

Secondly, *Consider, as God hath assigned no measure for thy humiliation, so neither can any man set thee a stint, to say, whosoever is or shall be saved, shall be, and must be, to this, or this degree humbled.* I say no man is able to do it, because Gods dispensations are various: God will not be tract in his goings, who hath found out his foot-steps? *His wayes are past finding out*, they are like the way of an Eagle in the air. Now God hath many wise ends in the variety of the dispensations of his free grace: 2.

There are severall sorts of people, that God deeply humbles oftentimes.

1. As 1. *Those that he intends for some great service in his Church, either to preach the Gospel, for the conversion of so many*, as *Paul* Act. 9. *Or when it may be he intends, that they shall come out, and become witnesses for his truth*: These fine vessels, God usually hammers and files very much.

2. 2. *Such as God perhaps sees, have quick and high spirits, and will be enclinable to filthy pride*, The Lord layeth them low, that they may have their spirits tamed, and be brought into a lowly subjection to Jesus Christ; And this might be one cause of *Pauls* humiliation too, deeper then any other of the Apostles we read of.

3. 3. *Such as have been notorious publike sinners: Manasses* must be brought to Babylon, laid in irons, then received to mercy; half hang'd, then the rope must be cut, and the man saved; just sinking in hell, then lift up by the chin; he had been a persecutor, he had made Jerusalem swim with innocent blood, and that might be another reason of *Pauls* so deep humiliation.

4. 4. And yet, *In these the wayes of God are not the same to our eye. Peter* an eminent preacher, yet we reade of no such humiliation in him. *Mary Magdalen* a grievous devil-possest sinner, and yet we reade of no such sorrow in her: God will not be tract in his wayes, we must not know the manner of his workings with his Saints, he will chuse whom he list, and why he lists, and he will bring them in how he lists, and when he lists, *Eccl.* 3. 11. *No man can finde out the work of God, that he maketh from the beginning to the end.* Gods wayes are like the wayes of a serpent upon a rock, and although I think with Master *Shepheard*, that we cannot conclude, because we do not reade of the like humiliation of *Lydia*, and others of the Apostles, therefore they had no such humiliation as *Paul*; Yet I cannot but think, that therefore their sorrows

rows are not revealed, that we might not ſtumble upon them, and tye up God to ſuch and ſuch diſpenſations, as if God could work but one and the ſame way.

5. Beſides, *There may be a cauſe in the temper and variety of diſpoſitions, upon which God makes his ſpeciall grace glorious.* God hath ſome that are rough pieces of knotty timber, theſe he hewes, and cuts much before he makes them fit for his Sanctuary: Others of more genuine, and, meek, and ingenuous tempers, would be chopt in pieces, if ſo much ſhould be hewen off them. Some grounds need not ſuch ſtubbing, and digging, and plowing, and harrowing, they will be fit to receive the ſeed without ſo much labour. 5

6. *Some diſpoſitions are not ſo fixt, as to ſettle long upon an object, as to be ſo deeply affected with it, as others are.* "*Moveable diſpoſitions* (ſaith Doctor Sibbs) *are not* "*not long affected with any thing, and therefore* (ſaith he) "*one main uſe of croſſes, is to take off the ſoul from that* "*it is ſo dangerouſly ſet upon, and fix our running ſpirits:* "Again (ſaith he) *the ſpirits may be ſometimes weak, and* "*ſo waſted, that they would not be able to indure ſo ſtrong* "*a conflict of grief as others that are of freſh, and ſtrong,* "*& ſtout ſpirits:* And in ſuch a caſe God hath promiſed, not to fix his wrath upon the ſoul too heavily, *Iſa.* 57. 16. *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I bee alwayes wroth, for the ſpirits ſhould then fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made.* Be comforted (Chriſtian) when thou conſidereſt the variety of Gods diſpenſations, though thou doeſt not finde him acting in ſuch a diſpenſation to thee, as poſſibly he hath done to others: It may be he hath not appointed thee for ſuch an eminent ſervice, he intends not perhaps to call thee to martyrdom; Poſſibly thou wert by nature of a dejected melancholy ſpirit, and more indiſpoſed to pride, then others; Perhaps he had not ſuffered thee to run into ſuch outragious 6

wickednesſes, as others did, for which they muſt pay more tears to his bottle? Poſſible thou wert not of ſo moroſe and rugged a temper, as others; that thou didſt not need ſuch ſtubbing and digging; not ſo knotty, that thou ſhouldſt need ſo much cutting and hewing; though thou hadſt as many bad humours as others, by nature, yet it may be that they were not ſo ſetled, and putrified by vitious cuſtome; or if they were, yet be comforted in this, that God acts not with great ſinners and perverſe natures, and proud tempers, and eminent veſſels, alike. Who art thou to tract the Almighty? to limit the holy one of Iſrael? and if that God acts in ſuch various diſpenſations, know that it is not in the power of man to ſet a meaſure.

3. Thirdly, *Conſider the end of humiliation, and if the end be wrought, take no thought for the means.* The ends of humiliation are chiefly theſe two. First, *To make ſin bitter to the ſoul, to bring the ſoul into a loathing and deteſtation of ſin.* Secondly, *To make the ſoul in a capacity of acting Faith.*

1. 1. The firſt end, *is to bring the ſoul into a loathing and leaving of ſin*; That *Ephraim* may ſpeak two words, First, What have I done? Secondly, What have I to do with Idols? Conſider, thou ſayeſt, I have not been humbled enough, how ſhall we judge that? 1. Hath thy humiliation made thee to loath ſin? That thou ſayeſt as *Job* 42.6. *I abhor my ſelf, and repent*: Mark, the end of repentance is ſelf-abhorring. Doeſt thou ſay with *David*? *Pſal.* 119.163. *I abhor and hate lying, and every falſe way*, verſe 104. *And I hate vain thoughts*, verſe 119. *And I hate them that hate thee*, Pſa.139.21,22. This is enough, reſt thy thoughts in it. *Heb.*1.9. *Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity; therefore thy God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladneſs above thy fellows.* That which was there ſpoken of God concerning Chriſt, is true of all his members; hath thy little humiliation

miliation (which thou thinkest is not enough) wrought thus in thee? that whereas thou wert a drunkard, liar, swearer, unclean person, a vain proud person, a companion of fools, Now thou canst say, and say heartily, that thou hatest drunkennesse, swearing, lying, sabbath-breaking, vanity, formality, yea, and those that do these things? Why now thy humiliation hath wrought it's end. Why shouldst thou not love righteousnesse, rest upon Christ, apply the promises, &c. To say now, I cannot think I have ground to beleeve, is as much as if one should say, when he hath made use of a scaffold to build a great building, Alas! I cannot beleeve that I may lay the top-stones of my building, my scaffold is not high enough, or it is not strong enough; when it hath proved it self both high enough, and strong enough, in holding to accomplish the work. Doctor *Sibbs*, in answer to this question, When is Godly sorrow such as that the soul may stay it self with comfortable thoughts about its conditions? Giveth these Rules.

Sibbs soul conflict. p. 379.

5. *Rules.*

1. *When we finde strength against that sin which we formerly fell into, and ability to walk in a contrary way.*

2. *When that which is wanting in grief, is made up in fear.*

3. *When after grief, we finde inward peace.*

4. *When after it, we value the grace and mercy in Christ above all the contentments in the world.*

5. *When it springs from hatred, and works true hatred against all sin.*

First, Now (saith he) *true hatred is carried against all sin.*

Secondly, Especially, *against those sins which are most near. Sorrow for sin proceeds from the affection of the soul; Hatred from judgement, and we ought rather to rest in our hatred of sin, proceeding from our judgement, then in our sorrow for sin proceeding from our passions:* Considering that the fountain of passions is deeper in men of a melancholy,

lancholy, and reserved temper, then in others of a quick and chearly temper, and yet these may hate sin as well as the other.

2. The *second end of humiliation, is to make us in a capacity of receiving Christ.* Every soul is not in a capacity of receiving Jesus Christ, when the soul is willing, and desirous to receive Christ, then it is in a capacity of receiving him. And the soul cannot act Faith, by resting upon Christ, till it be made willing. Some will say, doth not Jesus Christ work this willingness? yes without question, *It is he that worketh both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure, Phil.* 2. 13. But yet he first worketh to will, before he worketh to do, and before the soul is willing, it is not in a capacity of doing. *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whosoever willeth, let him drink of the water of life freely:* First, will, then take, then drink, and yet it is free. *They shall indeed be willing, in the day of his power, Psal.* 110. 3. God draws the will, but he makes us willing first, before he gives us power to receive, and apply Christ, which is the act of Faith. Now God useth means to work this willingness, and that is humiliation. *Hos.* 5, 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me early.* If thy humiliation hath wrought this effect in thy soul, that thou art now made willing to receive Christ Jesus, O beleeve, act thy Faith, let thy measure of humiliation never trouble thee, it hath wrought it's end.

2.

3. I might name a third end of humiliation, and *that is to inhance the price of Iesus Christ to the soul.* Christ would not be so sweet, if sin were not so bitter. Dost thou finde this end wrought? that now Christ is more precious to thee then thousands of gold and silver, more sweet then thousands of lusts and corruptions? That thy heart now sayes, O that I had Christ, though I had nothing

thing in the world? that I had the bread of life to eate, and the water of life to drinke, Though I beg'd my bread, and wanted water, all the daies of my life? O that I had the robes of his righteousnesse, to cloath my soule, though I went naked! O give me Christ, O give me Christ, above all, for all, instead of all, or else I die. Here now be comforted, the end is wrought againe, and thou hast no ground not to beleeve, because thou art not enough humbled. The cause must not destroy the end; The end of humiliation, is as you have heard. What serves humiliation for, but to bring thee to it? If thou beest already by humiliation brought, that thou art grieved for sin past, that thou hatest sin present, that thou loatheſt the thoughts of embracing sin for the time to come, that thou art made willing to close with Jesus Christ, that thou prizest him above all the earths contentments whatsoever; thou hast no ground, nay thou sinnest in letting thy Faith stumble upon this threshold.

4. Consider, that it is possible thou mayest misjudge thy selfe in this point of the measure of humiliation too: The fountain of humiliation is often so deep, that we cannot fadom it; the Well may be deep, though we see but a little of it. First, Consider, that in thy humiliation, *you must measure length and breadth, and all.* Secondly, *Consider, thou must measure inside, as well as outside.* Thirdly, you must *remember it is not done, though it may be done enough for thee to apply a promise, and rest upon Jesus Christ, and receive, and apply him to thy soule.*

First, Many Christians mistake upon this principle. 1.
Why doest thou thinke thy humiliation is not enough? They will answer you, alas, I was never in such a depth of amasing sorrow, as *Paul* was, as I have heard such and such a Christian was, they were even in the jawes of Hell. My work was a slight work to theirs. Halfe so

much broad-cloath, of a great breadth, will make a ſuit as well, as ſo much again of ſome that is not halfe the breadth; the breadth makes amends for the length of the other. Others, God hath given them deep ſorrow, but ſhort, perhaps he hath given thee long ſorrow, but not ſo broad and deep: there may be as much water in a ſhallow pond, that is broad, as in a deep well that is ſtraight. It may be thou haſt been divers moneths, weeks, yeeres, under thy ſorrow, though it was not ſuch an heart-rending ſorrow, as others might be. They had ſorrow that even rent their heart in pieces, but it laſted not ſo long as thine, before they had joy: God meaſured out their meaſure in depth, and thine in breadth.

2. Secondly, Conſider, *if you will meaſure your humiliation right, you muſt meaſure both inſide, and outſide.* Poſſibly, you judge you are not humbled enough, becauſe you have not ſhed ſo many teares as others have, you meaſure it only in the outſide, alas, many tempers are not ſo diſpoſed to teares as others. Suppoſe two men were wounded, the one bleeds nothing or little at all, the other bleeds that the blood ſtaines all his apparell, runs down the ſtreets; you ſee ſcarce a drop of blood come from the other, but the wound cloſeth; will you therefore ſay, that the one bleeds not ſo much as the other? nay ſurely you will ſay, that hee bleedes more deſperately, he bleeds inwardly. The ſeat of humiliation is the heart, not the eye. Humiliation is not to be meaſured by wet handkerchiefs; the ſwolne face, is not alwaies the outſide of a moſt broken heart; poſſibly your heart weepes, your ſoule is ready to burſt with groanings, but you want the vent of your eyes, they are tongue-tyed. The meaſure of your humiliation for all this may be greater then the other.

3. Thirdly, Poſſibly ſome may ſay, O but can I thinke that God requires no more teares? no more ſadneſſe? for thoſe thouſands of ſins that I have in my life time com-

committed against him? *Consider therefore Christian, that your humiliation is not past, when you have apprehended and applyed Christ to your soules.* You must reserve some teares for the time to come, you have humiliation-work after Faith, *Zach.* 12.10. Though the seven Devils be cast out, and *Mary* be set by Christ, yet she may wash his feet with the teares of her eyes, and wipe them with the haires of her head: She may come againe, and stand behind him weeping, you have to do to looke upon him whom you have piereed and mourne. As the man that takes Physicke, it workes before he takes his broth, but that sets it a working againe, and more; So though before you apply Jesus Christ there will be some humiliation, yet your receiving him and resting upon him by Faith, doth not stop up your fountain of teares, you shall have a mourning time after that; save an handkerchiefe to wet then.

Fifthly, For thy comfort consider, that humiliation ought not to be. 1. A ground of Faith, 2. Is not a ground of acceptation. The first will depend upon the latter.

First, *Consider, thy humiliation is not a ground of thy acceptation:* Thou art not therefore accepted, because thou art thus and thus humbled. "If we watch not our "nature (saith reverend *Sibbs*) there will be a spice of "popery, which is a naturall religion, in this great de- "sire of more griefe, as if when wee had that, wee had "something to satisfie God withall, and so our minde "still runs too much upon works. If free-grace did not clarifie teares, and the greatest sorrow wee could have for sin, those bitter waters would bee more filthy then the puddles of the street. If the blood of free-grace doth not cement a broken heart and accept it, and merit for it, Hell is its desert and portion, for all any merit in it. It is a good piece of prayer, *Psal.* 20. 3. *The Lord accept thy sacrifice*, or [make fat thy sacri- 1.

fice] or [turne thy sacrifice into ashes] A broken, and a contrite heart is the Lords sacrifice, which he will never despise, *Psal.* 51. 17. But the Lord must, 1. *Turn it into ashes*, 2. *Make it fat*, 3. *Accept it*——And therefore this can bee no sufficient *remora* in thy way of Faith: For couldst thou make thy head a fountaine of water, and thine eyes rivers of teares, they should merit no salvation; heaven is not to bee bought with sighs, nor art thou therefore accepted, because thou art humbled, but even thy humiliation must have an acceptation, otherwise God should save us not for his own sake, and for his Name sake, (as indeed he doth) but for our teares sake, for our humiliation sake, for our workes sake; for Christians must warily consider, that God doth not save his people and accept his children for those workes, which his owne spirit worketh in them: This is a Doctrine of Popery, who to wash their hands of the Doctrine of merits wherewith they are charged, tell us they hold no such matter, as that a Christian may be saved by his owne workes, but God gives him grace to work good workes, and for them he accepts, for them he saves. We say no, for even the works of Gods spirit of grace, acting in us, are our workes, and salvation is not of works, but of grace. And this Evangelicall lesson is hinted to us, even in the Ceremoniall Law; The Lord commands a yeerely day of atonement, *Levit.* 16. for the sins of the holy place. To prove this, I might instance in all those Texts of Scripture, of which the Epistle to the *Romans*, and *Galatians*, are especially full, and so the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, which treat concerning the Doctrine of Justification, and clear it not to be of workes, neither internall, nor externall, but of grace: But I will instance but in one, *Tit.* 3. 5, 6, 7. *But after that the kindnes* (saith he) *and the love of God our Saviour, toward man appeared. Not by the workes of righteousnesse, which*

wee

we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, Mark ye, *by it,* not *for it*: Gods mercy and free grace, is the ground of the soules acceptation, and therefore consider upon what principle thou runnest, that concludest, I have not yet been enough humbled, for to be accepted, as if thy humiliation were the reason and ground of Gods acceptation. Indeed we ought never to think that wee are enough humbled, and yet wee ought alwaies to thinke that humiliation too much, and that sense of our sinnes too much, which hinders Faith, for it destroyes its end. Therefore why art thou thus troubled (Christian) with this conceit, that your Faith is no Faith, because before it, you wept not just so many teares? It is Faiths work, to believe and apprehend the soules acceptation before God. Now Gods acceptation, as you have heard, is never for the soules humiliation; and therefore, what should hinder thy Faiths working, in apprehending thy acceptation before God, because thou art not accepted for this worke any more then any other——Nay,

Secondly, *Thy humiliation is not a ground of Faith*: 2.
Thou dost not therefore apply Christ, because thou art so and so humbled. Put case, that a great Prince should be willing to bestow his sonne in marriage upon a poore peasant; onely (saith he) I will make this terme or condition, that when you come to marry him, you shall come in sackcloth, to shew what yee are, he shall give you a better garment afterwards; will any one say, that this maids coming to the marriage arraied in sackcloth, is a ground of her so rich marriage? or will any say it is a meritorious condition, that she deserveth such a match, to come so attired? Surely no, the ground of all is the Princes delight in her; this is the ground of his taking her to wife, and yet the King commanded that attire. So the Lord saith, Poor! vile wretch I I will

will give thee my Chriſt in marriage, but thou ſhalt come weeping, to ſhake hands with him weeping for thy ſins; he ſhall afterwards take off thy ſackcloth-garments. Can any ſay, that this is either a meritorious condition, or a ground of acceptation, or Faith? Conſider (Chriſtian) wert thou never ſo much humbled, thou couldſt not ſay, I will therefore beleeve becauſe I am humbled. Humiliation is a neceſſary antecedent to Faith, but no ground of Faith. Let not that therefore be a ſtumbling block to thee, which cannot bee a pillar and foundation to thee; if thy faith cannot ſtand upon it, let it never ſtumble upon it.

And thus I have done with the ſecond thing I propounded, which was, to propound ſuch conſiderations to ſuch ſoules, as were under this temptation, as might comfort their hearts, and ſtrengthen and ſtabliſh them: Only, I beſeech you remember to whom I have beene ſpeaking all this while; not to hard-harted ſtony ſoules, but to broken and humbled ſoules; not to thoſe that regard not to get their ſoules humbled at all, but to thoſe that are humbled, that they can bee humbled no more, and that groan under the hardneſſe of their own hearts; not to thoſe that preſume to apply their hot boyling luſts and corruptions, to the blood and wounds of Jeſus Chriſt, flattering themſelves with a notion of Faith, and conceiting they doe beleeve; but to thoſe that are humbled, though they cannot have a good thought of of themſelves.

I would not be miſunderſtood, to have ſpoken one word to ſlight the work of humiliation, or to cheriſh that licentious novell Doctrine, that there is no need at all of it, and a Chriſtian ſhall not need regard it; but what I have ſpoken, hath been not for dead men, (what ſhould they do with cordials?) but for dying, fainting, ſwooning Chriſtians; not for them that conſider their ſins too little, but for them that ſo dim their eyes with po-

poring on them, that they cannot see the absolute covenant of God, and the free-grace of Christ, and lay hold upon the promises of life. There is an extream on either side; the sober Christian avoids either, and keeps the mean. So I have done with the second thing I propounded, *viz.* to propound some considerations, which might comfort the afflicted soul under this affliction, and strengthen it to resist this temptation. For without question, as the Devil hath a designe upon many a soul, to run it upon a rock of presumption, and carry it on in a blind notion of Faith, so he hath a designe upon some souls, to wrack them upon the sands, and sink them in a pit of despair. The Devils devouring voice to souls, is either; There is no need of humiliation, or, there is no humiliation enough. I come now to the last thing which I propounded, which is, to give some directions to such souls as are burthened with this affliction, and groan under this temptation, how to demean themselves and what to do. I will reduce all that I shall speak, by way of direction, to these heads.

First, Eye the nature of the covenant, and grace, and promises of God more. Secondly, Eye the nature and cause of humiliation more. Thirdly, Labour to get thy heart more humbled.

First of all, *Eye the nature of God, declared in the free dealings out of his grace to thee. This I shall enlarge in* three instances.

1. *Eye Gods covenant, and the nature of that.*
2. *Eye Christs grace, and the nature of that.*
3. *Eye the Promises and the nature of them.*

First, *Eye the nature of God in his covenant more.* The cause of this affliction is Christians too much eying, and poring upon their sins, and themselves; the penitent believer ought to have two eyes, one to look downward, another to look upward. This is that which *David* comforted himself with, when he considered his

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own unworthiness, and the unworthiness of his house, 2 *Sam.*23.5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, for this is my salvation, all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow.* *David*, though a man according to Gods own heart, yet had a wicked house, *Absolom* had slain his brother, rebelled against his Father, lay with his Fathers concubines; *Amnon* had defloured his sister, &c. Now *David* looking upon this personall unworthiness, both of his own person, and of his children, was humbled for it, and in sadness of heart saith, *Although my house be not so ordered with God, &c.* Not so ordered as it should be, not ordered according to the mercies that I have received from God: Yet see how he casts up another eye, and views the covenant of God; yet saith he, The Lord hath made with me an, 1. *Everlasting covenant*, 2. *Ordered*, and 3. *Sure, for this is my salvation, &c.* Christian do thou the like; thou poorest upon thy self, and readest a great deal of personall unworthinesse, seest thousands of sins, the least of which might damn thee and damn a world, seest much mercy bestowed upon thee by God, and all mercies abused by thee, to the dishonour of God; yet comfort thy self by eying Gods covenant, and say, Although my heart, although my life, be not so ordered with God, although my soul be not so humbled before God, yet the Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, and a sure covenant, the covenant of peace and grace with my soul was from eternity, and therefore free and without cause in the creature. I had neither an hard heart, nor a soft heart, when God made that covenant with me, and it is a sure covenant; as God never made a covenant with me for the softness and tenderness of my heart, so neither will he cast me off, for the hardness of my heart, and it is a covenant ordered

dered in all things. He hath made a covenant with me, as to give me salvation, so to give me such an heart as he requires of me, in order unto my salvation; and for this is my salvation. I shall not be saved for the worthiness of my house, nor for the worthiness of my person, not for the tenderness of my heart, but because he hath made a covenant with me: Here is the groundwork, here is the cause of my salvation.

Thus Christian, eye 1. *The eternity of the covenant.* 2. *The sureness of the covenant.* 3. *The freeness of the covenant.* 4. *The particularity of the covenant.* God hath not made his eternall covenant at random, with those souls that shall be broken hearted, and shall beleeve: No (saith *David*) *he hath made with me a sure, well-ordered, everlasting covenant*; the other is *Arminian* and licentious Doctrine. God hath made a covenant with thee, and an everlasting covenant with thee, and a sure covenant with thee; eye this and say, Well, though my heart be not so humbled before God as it ought to be, though my soul be not so broken, though my whole man be not so ordered, yet God hath made with me in particular, an everlasting covenant, sure, well-ordered, and for this is my salvation.

Secondly, *Eye the nature of God and Jesus Christ, in the dispensations of his grace more.* The truth of it is, the covenant, the eternall covenant that God hath made with sinners, is but a declaration of his grace; but I conceive, there is a difference between Gods declarations of his grace, and his dispensations of his grace; though that every dispensation of grace be a declaration of his grace, yet every declaration of his grace, is not a dispensation: Declarations of Grace may be general, Dispensations of grace are particular. God declared his grace and love to mankinde, when he made that promise, *The seed of the woman shall break the serpents head:* But now he made a dispensation of his

grace, when he gives a gracious soul power to draw out it's part in this promise. Now doest thou sit troubled, that thy soul is not thus and thus humbled, not enough brought low, &c. eye the dispensations, the particular dispensations of Gods grace. *Consider to whom God hath made dispensations of his grace.* 1. *In what manner God hath dispensed (and revealed the dispensations of) his Grace.* Sit down and think of the Saints of God, that God hath dealt out his saving grace to, and thou shalt finde them the most worthlesse and vile wretches. To *Paul* the persecuter, the blasphemer, so hard-hearted, that he could spill the blood of the tender-hearted Saints of God; yet this *Paul* the Lord humbled, and dealt out his grace to: To *Manasses*, so hard-hearted that he filled the land with innocent blood, that nothing would humble but a gaole and shackles and fetters, yet this *Manasses* tasted of the divine dispensations of grace. 2. *Consider in what manner God hath dispensed his grace, and revealed the dispensations of his grace to these poor creatures.* Indeed I am apt to beleeve, that of all those Saints in Scripture, not one saw Christ without a weeping eye, and a mourning heart; but yet this is certain, that God hath not in his word set out to us the like humiliation of *Lydia* as of *Paul*, and of the Gaoler: Though I am of M. *Shepheards* minde, that *Lydia* was humbled as well as *Paul*; yet I conceive there are two things that we may gather for a souls comfort, from the holy Ghosts so variously setting down Gods dealings with those souls whom he hath brought home to himself; so fully and deeply expressing the sorrows of some, as of *Paul* and *Manasses*, and the Gaoler, and so tacitely concealing the sorrows of others, as of *Lydia*, or so moderately revealing of them; as concerning those converted at Saint *Peters* Sermon, concerning whose humiliation we have onely this upon record, that *they were prickt at the heart.* I say, I conceive there are two things that

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that we may gather from it, for a souls comfort under this affliction.

First, *That Gods dealings in this particular, are not alike with every soul that he humbleth, some more and deeplyer, some lesse for his own ends:* Which I hinted you before. 1.

Secondly, I conceive, we may gather this from that various dealing of the holy Ghost, in the word of God, in expressing Gods way with his people, *viz. That it is Gods will that souls should not stumble upon this rock, and stick here; we are not yet enough humbled, not thus and thus humbled;* we ought to look for some, but not to stick at the want of the same measure of humiliation, which some of the Saints of God have had. Consider these things Christian! weigh the reason of Gods so various dealing with his converts, and various expressions (of his dealing with them) in his revealed word, and let this comfort and direct thee, and raise thee up: say with thine own heart, My soul! why should these thoughts hinder thee from going on? Gods dealings with all his converts, is not alike; and God would have in the same even manner, surely have revealed the sorrows and humiliations of all his children, as of any, if he would have had me stumbled at this, and made this a block in my way to him. 2.

Thirdly, *Eye the nature of Gods promises.* Mark how the promises run, whether absolutely or conditionally; and if conditionally, whether upon this condition, that the soul should be thus and thus deeply humbled. O (faith a gracious soul) do you set me to eye them? they undo and ruine me, I finde the promises of Gods giving Christ to my soul, run all upon conditions of hungring and thirsting, *Isai.* 55. 1, 2, 3. Of being weary and heavy laden, *Mat.* 11. 29. Of being lost and undone, and this is that which I stick upon. I will answer thee in this particular. 3.

First, *Tis true, such is the tenor of the promises, they do require hungring and thirsting, &c.* Though not as meritorious conditions; yet consider, *That they require no more then God hath promised to give.* See this *Zach.* 12. 10. *Ezek.* 11. 19, 20. & 36. 26, 27. Where God hath promised to give that same tender, broken, contrite heart, which other promises require the soule to have, that doth apply them to it self.

2. Secondly, *Consider, that those promises that seeme to require humiliation and brokennesse of heart, as conditions or qualifications (call them what you will) doe no where require such and such a measure*; they require *rem*, but not *mensuram*.

3. Lastly, *And for thy great comfort consider, that those originall promises, in which God hath promised to give that tenderneſſe and brokennesse of heart, which he seemeth to require in other promises, as a condition and qualification* for the soule, to whom of due it belongs to apply those promises: I say, those promises are absolute: for this take but two instances, *Ezek.* 11. 19, 20. & 36. 26, 27. which are much the same. "*And I will give* "*them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you,* "*and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will* "*give them an heart of flesh, that they may walke in my* "*statutes, &c.* First he saies, they cannot walk in my statutes, and keepe my ordinances, untill their stony heart bee gone, and they have an heart of flesh: 2. Secondly, They cannot have this heart of flesh till I give it them; And thirdly, I will give it them. 3. Now sit down and eye the promises, say thus: It is true, God doth require an heart of flesh, before I can apply the promises of pardon to me, but the same God hath promised to give it me; and there must, there can nothing bee done of me, in relation to that first gift God hath freely promised, to prepare me to apply his salvation, and to walk in his statutes, by taking away my heart of stone, and giving

ving me an heart of flesh, and believe, but this, that God will fulfill this free and absolute promise to thee. It is thy duty not only to beleeve that God will pardon thee, but also to beleeve that God will humble thee; and not to stick upon, I am not humbled enough to apply the promise, but to say, I will labour to apply the promises of salvation, and to beleeve that God will humble mee more, and make good (amongst others) that promise to my soule, that hee hath made to his people, that hee will take away their heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh, &c.

And thus I have done with the first direction to the afflicted soul. Eye the nature of God more in his covenant: Secondly, In the dispensation of his grace: Thirdly, In his promises. I come now to my second direction, and that is,

Secondly, *Consider the nature of humiliation*; and this thou mayest consider: First, in its originall: Secondly, In the manner of the operation of it: Thirdly, In its end. The two latter I have handled at large, in my considerations I propounded to comfort the soul in its affliction; I will but name them. First, Think that thy humiliation may be as great as it should be, though not so deepe as others have been, it may bee it hath beene longer. Secondly, It may have a more inward worke. Thirdly, its working is not done, it will have a worke as long as thou livest. 2. Consider the nature of it, in its end: First, Meditate that the end of thy humiliation, is but to bring thee to loath sinne; Secondly, Leave sinne; and thirdly, to make thee prize Christ. If this be done, it hath done its work. But this I enlarged my selfe upon before. 3. (which should have beene indeed first) *Consider the nature of humiliation in its originall, and efficient cause*, which is God, *Zach.* 12. 10. *Ezek.* 11. 19, 20. and sit down now and say, Certainly, God hath a good worke begun in my soule, otherwise, why 2.

why should sin trouble me at all? or why should I be troubled, that I am not troubled for my sinne? and now how unreasonable a thing is it for me, to start from applying the promises, because in my conceit, I am not enough humbled? It is God that hath humbled me at all, and it is he that must perfect the worke in my soule; and surely, if he sees it is not enough, he will work more, and he must do it if he will have it, for I am not able to humble my soule. Thus farre my direction hath reached to help thee to ease thy selfe, and direct thee what to do in point of meditation, and consideration. My third reacheth thy practice.

3. Lastly, *Labour after more and more humiliation.* Neither keep thy heart from beleeving, in infidelity out of a conceit of the want of it, nor yet slight and neglect it: Both these rocks must be avoided, as pernicious rockes for poor souls, & between which there is a safe passage. Let the world think what they will, and opinionists cry down that great worke: *Want of humiliation,* saith Master *Shepherd, is the cause of so much counterfeit coin, as is in the world; and again (hee saith) we shall observe, if there be little humiliation, there is little of Christ; if much of humiliation, much of Christ; if inconstant humiliation, inconstant fruition of Christ; if reall humiliation, reall possession of Christ; if false humiliation, imaginary fruition of Christ.* Therefore, though I would not have thee so weep, but thou shouldest have a spare eye to look up to the free grace of Christ, yet I would not have thee so much fix thy eye upon the mercy, and free grace of Christ, that thou shouldest have never an eye to weepe for thy sins. Humiliation and Faith are two things, that are consistent together; That's the last direction.

Sound Beleever p. 104. Ib. p. 146.

Labour to get thy soule more humbled. I know thou wilt say, how shal I do that? truly I might give infinite directions, but this is so ordinary a point, in which so ma-

many pious men have laboured, that I shall but name to you some directions that they point out, as helps to the soule in this worke. Master *Shepherd* gives these helps. Ib. *p.*150.

1. *Remember whose thou art*, Rom. 9. 20.

2. *Remember what thou art, a vile wretch*, Job 40. 3, 4.

3. *Remember what thou hast been, and how long thou hast been so, and why should God choose thee.*

4. *Remember what thou wilt be*, Isa. 64. 6. good for nothing in his service, &c.

Doctor *Preston* gives these directions, *vol.* 4.

1. *Labour to see the greatnesse of thy sin.*

2. *To see the inability to help thy selfe.*

For the first he propounds this.

1. *Fix your thoughts upon some great sin.*

2. *Think of the number of thy sins.*

3. *Make past sins present think of youth-sins, &c.*

4. *Be not willing to extenuate, or excuse any sin.*

5. *Make sorrow abide upon your hearts.*

2. Consider the inability to help thy self.

1. *Think of Gods greatnesse and strictnesse.*

2. *Of thy weaknesse and sinfulnesse.*

And in another place he gives these directions.

1. *Every day search thy heart, for the sinnes thou hast committed that day.*

2. *Study the Scriptures, they will discover your vile hearts more to you.*

3. *Keep your hearts and wales upright, that is the way to keep them from hardning.*

4. *Be diligent in your calling.*

5. *Remember times and sins past.*

6. *Distinguish betwixt grace in thee and thy selfe, of thy self.*

Many other directions have been and may bee given, I will reduce all to these two or three heads.

1. *Consider the nature of thy sin.*

2. *Con-*

2. *Consider the mercy of thy God.*
3. *Run unto God.*

Now these may be branched out, into severall particulars.

1. *Consider sins in the filthinesse of them.*
2. *In the greatnesse of them.*
3. *In the multitude of them.*
4. *In the aggravations of them.*
5. *In the effects of them.*
6. *In the dangerous consequence and guilt of them.*

2. Consider the mercy of God.
1. *that hath spared thee from hell so long.*
2. *That yet wil pardon thee.*
3. *That yet will give thee heaven and glory.*

3. But, when thou hast done all what thou canst this way, these are but poor helps; the surest way is, to *Fly to God by prayer*, and intreat him to work his owne worke. So the Church, *Hos.* 14.2. Here thou mayest plead with God: First, *His promises*, Zach. 12.10. *Ezek.* 11.19,20. Secondly, *Thine own inability*, to do any thing towards this worke, though thou hast tried much; and after all this, rest upon God for his own work doing, and labour to frame thy heart to beleeve, hee will fulfill his promises, and humble thee, *that thou mayest walke in his statutes, and apply his promises to thee for thy salvation.* This is my advice to thee, and the Lord give his blessing to it. And thus I have laboured to sift the first Objection of the soul, why it cannot beleeve; or the first mistake of the soul, grounded upon the souls too much eying preparatory qualifications

SER.

Serm. III.

Isaiah 1.18.

Though your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll.

I Have already shewed you, that one great cause, Why many poor doubting souls, are afraid to lay any comfortable hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ tendered in the gospel-promises, is their mistake in the grounds of faith, and so they may mistake,

By judging their preparatory humiliation a ground of beleeving, and such a measure too of that, as they fancy necessary, or have found others of Gods Saints humbled with, and this mistake I have laboured to cleer.

Secondly, We are too apt to mistake the ground of faith to be our own worthinesse and cleannesse: and hence you shall have such Christians cry out, *Alas Sir! Would you have us lay hold on Jesus Christ? what*

Complaint.

we that have so defiled our hands with sin, that have been such swearers, such drunkards, such profane wretches, such gospel despisers, such mockers of God, and the people of God? can we have any warrant to beleeve? what ground can we have, when we have given our youth to the Devil, to think that Jesus Christ will take the fag end of our life? No, no, blessed are they, that are yet young, and have not run into such sins as we have done; call to them to beleeve, even those that have lived honestly and civilly. Christ surely will have nothing to do with such profane ones as we are.

This whole complaint now is bottomed in a mistake of the ground of a faith, upon a conceit that it should be some cleanneſse and righteousneſse in our selves, but sinner I tell thee, there is warrant enough for thee, if the Lord hath smitten thy heart for thy sins, to beleeve in the Lord Lesus Christ: My text is warrant enough; for this is that which the Lord hath said, *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll:* this is that which Christ hath said, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, yea, and *publicanes and harlots shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, when the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out.*

Quid dicitis Paule & Silas? num tam facilis est via ad salutem? num is qui multis annis ab adolescentia sua idola coluerat, horrenda flagitia, qualia solent Ethnici, perpetraverat, & paulò ante vos innocentes ac sanctos viros in carcerem crudeliter conjecerat, & pedes vestros quos Prophetæ speciosos, utpote eorum qui annunciant pacem, vocavit, ligno strinxit, tam facile veniam suorum peccatorum consequetur, ut si saltem credat salutem habebit? Cur non jubetis eum omnibus diebus vitæ pane & aqua jejunare, non nisi vestimenti is lineis sese vestire, super spinas ambulare, ad templum Hierosolymitanum pisis calceamentis impositis peregrinari, & alia id genus opera facere, ut his peccata sua expiet, & pro illis satisfaciat sive mavis satis patiatur? At vero Paulus & Silas Apostoli Christi non Antichristi sunt. Brentius, in Acta Apo. Homil. 76.

It was to such a one as thou speakest thy self to be, that Saint *Paul* said, *Acts* 16. 31. *Beleeve on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved both thou and thy house.* *Brentius* hath an excellent passage in his homily on that text, (saith he) what is that you say *Paul* and *Silas*? Is the way to salvation so

easie, can this poor wretched Jaylour that for so many years even from his youth hath bin a worshipper of idols and a committer of all heathenish abominations, he that so lately cruelly handled you the holy, and innocent Saints of God; and set those feet in the stocks, which the Prophet calls blessed for bringing the glad tidings of peace, can this profane wretch so easily obtain salvation, that he needs do nothing but beleeve? surely you are mistaken: why do not you bid him fast all his life time, and feed himself with bread and water; and clothe himself with nothing but sackcloth or walk upon thorns, or take a pilgrimage, as good as bare-foot to Hierusalem, and do such works of repentance that he might expiate for his sins, or satisfie, or, if you will, *satis*-suffer for his sins? But (saith he) *Paul* and *Silas* were the Apostles of Christ, and not of *Anti-Christ*: it is the Doctrine of Anti-christ that we can satisfie for our sins, and merit our own heaven: the doctrine of Christ is that he alone must satisfie, and we beleeve, &c.

So I say to that Christian, though thou hast been such a sinner, yet it should be no barr to thy faith, and to this end I shall propound severall considerations to thee.

Cap. 3.

How to satisfie a poor soul doubting whether it may beleeve or no, because of it's many and great sins past, or it's continuing corruptions, and so deemeth it self unworthy.

FIrst of all consider, *Gods grace is enough for thee*; This scruple of thy spirit, ariseth from scant, and streightned thoughts of rich incomprehensible grace: Be con-

vinced therefore, that there is a fulnesse enough in the ocean of infinite grace to swallow up thy soule, however loaded with a burthen of sin; observe but how the Scripture setteth out infinite love: take one place for all, Eph. 3. 17, 18, 19. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the bredth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with the fulnesse of God.* Mark how the Apostle expresseth free grace, by all dimensions; are thy sins in the height? there is an height of love; are they in the depth? there is a depth of love; are they long, broad? are they all? yet there is mercy enough in this Christ, for such is his love that it passeth knowledge; are they a Mountaine? *why who art thou O great Mountaine before Zerubbabel? thou shalt be made a plaine*; doe thy sinnes cry up to Heaven? *his mercies are above the heavens*; are thy sins more in number then the haires of thy head? his mercies are more in number then the sand which lyeth on the sea shore. Now this is easie to bee conceived, if we do but conceive, and know that the mercies of God are infinite; God is an infinite God, and every mercy of his, is as inconceivable as himselfe is. His love *passeth all understanding* (saith the Apostle;) have no low thoughts (Christian) of the height of free grace which reacheth up to the Heavens, yea, and above the heavens; Is the filthy garments of thy wickednesse of a larger extent thinkest thou, then the long white robe of his righteousnesse, *Who was made for thee righteousnesse, wisdome, sanctification, and redemption? Is the fountaine set open for Judah, and Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleannesse, so shallow that thou canst not bath in it?* Mistake not (Christian) it is a bath of capacity to hold all filthy soules, be their uncleanness what it will, if they will but come and wash, and bee

clean;

clean; those that have the rottenest wounds, the filthiest sores, the most unsound carkasse, may fetch balm from Gilead enough to heale their wounds. When Christ was upon the earth, the Evangelist tels us, *Mat.* 4. 24. *They brought unto him all sicke people, that were sicke of diverse diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and he healed them.* When vertue went out from Christ, to heale the poore woman that touched the hemme of his garment, it went out of him as light goeth out of the sun, that there is no lesse for what goeth out. Christ never had any vertue went out of him, so as by such emission he lost any. How many Saints think you, since old *Abraham* (who was the father of the faithfull) to this day, have touched the hemme of his garment? vertue went out and healed every one, and yet his garments are all oily with mercy and grace still. How many drops of blood have thirsty Saints had from *Davids* time to this houre, and yet the fountain of cleansing blood, hath not a drop lesse in it? Grace in Christ is like the heat of the fire, or light of the sun, take how much you will of either, you shall not rob either: narrow not the breadth of incomprehensible love; when thou hast measured for believers ten thousand yards, there shall not bee a naile lesse on the piece of free-grace. The sea, though a thing infinite, will hardly bee measured out by quils, much lesse shall the unfadomable ocean of infinite love, be measured by drops for the washing poore soules from the staines and filth of their sins. The boy could tell the father, hee would have done emptying the sea into an hole with a spoon, before he should have opened the Doctrine of the Trinity: And sooner shalt thou get all the light out of the body of the sunne, and heat out of the fire, then put Jesus Christ to pant for his breath of free-grace. Oh, that sinners had but as willing legs as he hath capacious armes; we see hands are washed every day, and have

been theſe thouſand of yeeres, now how long can wee think it would yet bee, ſhould we get the dirtieſt hands we could make, before all the ſeas, rivers, fountaines, and ſtreames in the world, would be exhauſted; yea, though they ſhould waſh ſeven times a day: infinitely ſooner (Chriſtian) then the fountain of free-grace ſhall be exhauſted, with all the buckets that come to draw the water of life from it. Seeſt thou a ſteeple, as *Pauls* in *London*, or the like, of a very great height? ſeeſt thou the higheſt mountain that ſeems to have married the clouds, and ſit in their lap? Suppoſe now that mountaine or ſteeple in the deepeſt place of the ocean, how much wouldeſt thou ſee on it? nay, were another on the top of that, there would not be a ſpire of graſſe, nor a grain of duſt diſcernable: were thy mountain of ſinnes, that with their height ſeem not to threaten the clouds at all, but God himſelfe, were I ſay, that, yea and another, and a third, thouſands of them piled up and thrown into the ocean of infinite love, the bottomleſſe depth of his meritorious blood, the waters of free grace would ſtill be as much higher, as the heavens are higher then the earth, yea, infinitely higher then the higheſt planet is above the loweſt ſpring. *O the depth!* Suppoſe thou ſaweſt the higheſt *Cedar* in *Lebanon*, the higheſt *Pyramide* upon the earth; Make thy ſelfe a ladder of ten thouſand ſtaves if thou canſt, and rear it up, how much higher would the ſunne bee thinkeſt thou? infinite higher are the mercies of thy Saviour, Chriſtian, above the height of thy tranſgreſſions. *There is mercy enough*, thats the firſt——But this is eaſie enough to be evinced, a Chriſtian will tell you he cannot, dare not, doth not doubt this, hee doubteth not of the power, but of the will of God.

2. Secondly, Conſider therefore, *That there is will enough in the God of mercies, as well as power enough to ſave thee, if thou wilt but believe in him.* It is a note of pious

pious Master *Rutherford*, *That none can doubt, or say they doubt of Gods will, but they must really doubt of Gods power*; for if thou beleevest his power, thou must at the same time beleeve his will; But for this it is easie enough to evince the good will of God, to save the greatest of sinners. It is very observable, that when the Apostle speaks of Gods acts of grace, hee confirmeth his good will by an argument drawn from his power: so he concludes that the Jewes shall be graffed in, because he is able to graffe them in, *Rom.* 11. 23. and that the weak in Faith shall be holden up, because hee is able to hold them up, *Rom.* 14. 4. intimating, that as to Gods acts of grace, we need not doubt of the Lords good will, if wee bee confirm'd in Faith concerning his power, and have a promise. Where shall wee finde his will but in his Word? and how shall we judge of it but by his acts? It is a knowne and certaine rule, *That the Gospel shuts none out of Heaven, but those that by unbeliefe locke the gate against themselves*; Enquire but into Gods promises, is there the least parenthesis of any exception in all the pages of free grace? *Isa.* 1. 18. *Come now* (*saith God*) Let us reason together, *Though your sinnes bee as scarlet, I will make them as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall bee white as wool.* There is no sinners sin that is dyed in graine, but such as have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; Hast thou been a murtherer? thy sinne is yet but a scarlet die, I will make it as snow (saith God;) hast thou been a blasphemer? *All sin and blasphemy shall bee forgiven* (saith Christ) *Mat.* 12. 31. hast thou been an Idolater? an unclean wretch? *I will sprinkle clean water upon you* (*saith God*) *and you shall be clean from all your filthinesse, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you*, Eze. 36. 25. What? hast thou abused Christ, and spoken against him? who is thy only salvation? *Whosoever* (saith Christ) *speaketh a word against the Sonne of man, it shall bee forgiven him*, *Mat.* 12. 32.

Rut. *Trial of Faith*, p. 128.

Harke

Harke (Christian) is there not as much infiniteneſſe in thy Christs will (thinkeſt thou) as in his power?

2. Secondly, Nay, consider, *his will is not only ful enough of power, but there is an earneſtneſs of deſire in his will to ſave the greateſt ſinners, that leaving their ſins, will turne to him*; this will be eaſily enough evinced from his expreſſions and actions, tending to that end; *He ſpeakes, he ſweares, hee pleades, he expoſtulates, hee weeps, hee invites, he comes, he dies.*

1. 1. *He ſpeakes*, that you have heard, hee ſaith, I will ſave ſcarlet, crimſon, ſinners; I will ſay to them that are in their blood, *live, I will powre out water upon the unclean.*

2. 2. *He ſweares*, and hath bid us to tell you his oath *Ezek.* 33. 61. ſay unto them, *As I live* (ſaith the Lord) *I deſire not the death of a ſinner, but had rather that he ſhould turn from his wickedneſſe and live.* Lo, hee could ſwear by no greater, hee ſwears by himſelfe. *O happy creatures* (ſaith *Tertullian*) for whom God is pleaſed to put *himſelfe to his oath! O unbelieving wretches, if we will not truſt our God ſwearing!* Yet further,

O felices nos quorum cauſa Deus jurat! O infideles ſi juranti non credamus! Tertul.

3. 3. *He pleades, Turn ye, turn ye from your evill waies, why will yee die O ye houſe of Iſrael?* Micah 6. 3. *O my people! what have I done to thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? teſtifie againſt mee. Hee expoſtulates*, Iſai. 5. 4 *What could I have done more, for my vineyard then I have done? Wherefore when I looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*

4. 4. He appeales to the mountains and foundations of the earth, *Mic.* 6. 1, 2, 3. to the ſinners themſelves, *Iſa.* 5. 3, 4. *Judge now O yee inhabitants of Judah and Jeruſalem.*

5 5. He wiſhes groaning, *Deut.* 5. 29. *O that there were ſuch an heart in them that they would feare me, and keepe all my commandements always, that it might be well with them, and their children for ever.* And again, *Deut.* 32. 29.

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O that they were wise, that they understood this, and would consider their latter end.

6. *He professeth hee knoweth not how to destroy them,* Hosea 11. 8. *How shall I give thee up* Ephraim? *How shall I deliver thee O Israel? How shall I make thee as* Admah? *How shall I set thee as* Zeboim, *my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* 6 Hos. 11. 8.

7. He weepes when hee comes nigh Jerusalem, hee wept over it and said, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem——how oft would I have gathered thee, as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but thou wouldst not?* Mat. 23. 37. 38. Christ would, but the sinner would not. 7. Mat. 23 37, 38.

He invites, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2, 3. *Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, & he that hath no mony come, yea buy and eat without money, and without price*; and againe, ver. 3. *Incline your eare and come unto me, and your soule shall live*; Hark how hee cals, *Mat.* 11. 29. *Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will ease you.* The Father saith *come*, the Son saith *come*, the Spirit saith *come*, you that are in the hedges *come*, he sends out his servants to highway-people, *Mat.* 22. 9. To as many as are found there; why stay you disputing his will, when he so often saith *come, come?* Rev. 22. 17. *The Spirit and the Bride say come*, and *let him that heareth say come*, and *let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him drink of the water of life freely.* Is not all this enough to let thee know God is willing, and Christ is willing to receive thee? Lo, *Christ will come to thee.* 8. Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Mat. 11. 29. Mat. 22. 9. Rev. 22. 17.

9. See that essence of glory, bowing the Heavens and coming downe, laying aside his robes of Majesty, & putting on thy filthy garments, see him tiring himself in going about from place to place, upon no other errand then this, to cry at the markets, *Oh, if any sinners love life, happinesse, if any will go to heaven, let them come to me, I will shew them the way to my fathers bosome, and* 9.

endear them to my fathers heart. Read his Sermons, observe his paines, thou wilt finde a willing Saviour, not excepting publicans, and harlots from the kingdome of God.

10. 10. Wouldst thou have more tokens of his will yet? Mat. 21.31. *See him dying, hanging upon the crosse, dropping out his last blood, breathing out his last breath,* stretching out his dying armes to encircle sinners should run in to him, breathing out the breath of free grace in his very last act upon a theefe that had not an hour to live: Who shall despair? who shall say Christ is not willing to save him, and not blaspheme eternall love? speake truth! corrupt heart say thou art not willing to be saved.

11. 11. Is not this yet enough? *Observe him setting Ministers in his Church, lest thou shouldst not read, and none should tell thee the truth of his eternall love,* to speak out his good will in thine ears: All our errand is nothing but this, *sinners Christ is willing to save you, And as Embassadours for Christ as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ, stead be yee reconciled to* 2 Cor.5.20. *God.* 2 *Cor.*5.20. Why canst thou not beleeve his will? Consider in thy Saviours will, there is not onely a latitude for, but an eagernesse of thy eternall salvation: Why therefore doest thou say, my sins are so great that God will not pardon me? Beleeve, O blaspheme not the God of infinite good-will.

3. But thirdly, Consider, *That Gods eye of free-grace hath looked favourably upon, and Christs blood hath washed as filthy and polluted creatures, as thou art or canst* Esa.41.19. *be.* Christ hath planted in the wilderneſse, *The shittah tree, the mirtle, and the oil-tree, and hath set in the desert the fir-tree, and the box, and the pine tree;* Hee hath Esa.51.13. made as bad crab-stocks, as thy soule is, bring forth pleasant and delicious fruits. It is a note of Master *Rutherfords, that the dew of grace, hath ordinarily fain upon*

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the most graceless soules. Possibly thou mayest see and finde presidents of actuall sinners, borne as black as the *Ethiopian*, and that have made it their worke to filly themselves with the soot of sins, as much as thou hast, and that have dryed in sin with as long customary continuance, as thou hast done; yet Christ tooke them and washed them milke-white; hast thou been an idolater? a persecutor? so was *Manasses*; hast thou been unclean? so was *David*; hast thou crucified Christ? so had they that were converted at *Peters* Sermon; hast thou denyed Christ? so did *Peter* himselfe; hast thou been a blasphemer? so was *Paul*, yea, the chiefest of sinners, yet received to mercy; hast thou had seven devils? so had *Mary Magdalen*, yet purged and dispossest; hast thou put off all to the last cast? so did the theefe upon the crosse. Lo here! soules all mire and dirt, that nothing could bee discerned in them but filth and putrefaction; their faces were so mired with sin, that nothing of goodnesse could be discovered, yet these are now in heaven, all purified Saints, in whom there is no blemish, no spot, all crowned spotlesse heires of glory, without the least speck of the inke of sin upon them. Hast thou sinned beyond these thinkest thou? it is hardly credible, but suppose that free-grace hath not (so far as thou canst finde) any where set a stamp of love upon a soule so actually wicked as thou art before God; Yet secondly, *There is never a Saint this day in glory, that was not as seminally and habitually wicked, as thou art or canst be.* And free-grace looked upon him in restraining the corruptions of his heart, and preventing him, otherwise he had run with thee to the same excesse of riot and wickednesse; *David* was as filthy a wretch, when he wallowed and tumbled in his naturall blood, as thou art or canst be. But to passe on to a fourth consideration, which will hang upon a chaine with this. Act. 2. 2.

4. Fourthly, *If thou couldſt ſuppoſe that infinite free-grace, never yet did ſo great a work, as to waſh and ſave ſuch a ſinfull ſoul as thine is, yet this could not in reaſon be a juſt hinderance to thy Faith; becauſe, the depth of infinite love and free-grace, was never yet founded.* Though thou couldſt truly ſay, God never manifeſted his power and good will, in pardoning ſuch a creature of hell, as I am; yet what would follow? Therefore God cannot pardon me, or therefore God will not pardon me: Did ever God do his utmoſt, Chriſtian? thouſands of thirſty, filthy creatures, ſince the world began, have been bringing their buckets, and diving into the infinite depth of eternall love, but did ever any *Ethiopian* ſoul, dive ſo low as to bring up a ſtone from the bottome? was ever any ſinfull ſoul, that was brought to the ſtreams of free mercy, ſuch a capacious bucket that it could not be filled without grating upon the bottome of unfadomable love? nay, did ever any carry away ſo much for their own wants, that they left the living fountain at a low water? *Paul* brought as large a bucket, as any, and had as much need of a great meaſure of free grace: Well, he plungeth himſelf in, but doth he dive to the bottome, or doth he not, almoſt drowned in that depth of eternall ſweetneſs, turn head, and come up again with his belly and throat, and mouth, full of living waters, from the ſprings of eternall love? And cries out Ωβάθος. *O the depth of the riches, &c.* mark how he puts all the children of love upon diving into the depth, but puts them out of hope of finding the bottome or top of that *height, and depth, and length, and bredth of love*, Eph. 3. 17, 18, 19. *which paſſeth knowledge.* It is not ſo much to thee whom God hath pardoned, as whom God will pardon; is not the fountain of his love dry? are the ſprings yet running? nay, can he pardon beyond the meaſure of his former mercies? then how can thy ſins be too great to be pardoned? were there never ſuch ſinners pardoned? *Behold (ſaith God)*

Rom. 11. 33.

Eph. 3. 17, 18, 19.

Iſa. 43. 18, 19.

God) I will do a new thing in the earth, I will make a way in the wildernesse, and rivers in the desert; therefore remember not the former things, consider not the things of ald, not to stint the Lord by them; What? do you tell me *(saith God)* what I have done? I can do more then ever I yet did; *I am* not tied to presidents, I can make them.

Fifthly, *There is as much reason on thy part for Iesus Christ to receive thee, though thou beest (as thou sayest) the worst of sinners, as ever there was in* Noah, Daniel, *or* Job, *for him to receive them.* This is Master *Rutherfords* note, What internall cause was there thinkest thou, in any spotlesse Saints of glory, why Jesus Christ gave them Faith here, and hath now crowned them with a crown of glory? was there any? *Esa* 43. 25. *I (saith God) am he that blotteth out transgressions for mine own names sake.* God for his own sake elected them, therefore Christ died for them; Christ of his own good will powred out his blood for them, therefore he gave them power to beleeve, and come to him; here is all the cause *(ab extra)* from without still. And is there lesse cause in Christ for thee, then there was for them? look in his Gospel-promises; or is there lesse cause in thee, then a mere nothing? But I shall make this more full in a sixth position, which I shall commend to thy consideration, which is this, 5.

Rut. *Trial of Faith*, p. 20.

Esa. 43. 25.

Sixtly, *That God never received any soul, because it had a portion to set it off.* Thou sayest, O I cannot beleeve, &c. why I am not worthy of salvation, I am a great sinner, I have been an ancient sinner. Well then, suppose that thou never hadst to thy knowledge committed actuall sins, but wert (as thou thinkest) clean, and spotlesse, then thou couldst come to Jesus Christ, and think he would accept of thee. *Thy money perish with thee*; doest thou think that Christ, *that gift of* God, can be purchased with the money of thy merits? Doth Christ take any souls, be- 6.

cause they are worthy? or doth he therefore take them, that he might make them worthy? doth Christ therefore take a filthy mired sinner, because it is unclean? or that he might wash it from it uncleanness? God *gives* his Son, thou mistakest if thou thinkest he can be bought of thee, either for love or money; canst thou make Christ rich with the coblers ends of thy righteousnes? thinkest thou he that hath the inexhaustible treasury of righteousnes, doest thou think he cares for thy farthings? wilt thou bring thy drops to the bottomlesse ocean of his bloody merits? "*Your penny-worths cannot roll about*
M. Rutherford. "*that everlasting wheel of free-grace, the decree of ele-*
"*ction, nor bow, nor break Christs free-heart to save you*
"*more then another.* The Garden of free grace (Christian) hath never a weed of humane merit in it; no nor yet is there a space to set it in. The Robe of Christs righteousnesse is rich, and full enough, and needeth not the dunghill patches of thy merits? That new-cloth will not endure to be patched with thy old rags. Christ is a Noble-Bridegroom, that would take a portion with his spouse, if she could bring a proportion for him; *Adam*, if he could have got it up, might have been married to God with a dowry. But for as much as now that cannot be, perfection is not attainable. Christ scorns thou shouldst say, Thou hast brought him a farthing. The men of the earth shall not make him rich. The first marriage-contract God made with man, he demanded a portion, and proffered the joynture of glory: But when man with all his scrapings could not pay it, Come, saith Christ, I will take thee with nothing then. *Do all*, or *take all*, is Christs Dilemma to the children of men.

7. Lastly, Consider, *That by how much the greater and more abominable sinner thou art, by so much shall the Lord Christ attain his ends more fully which he aims at, in saving any souls.* Doest thou ask what that is? It

is

is his own glory, the glory of his free-grace. God when he declares his free-grace to any soul, makes a particular Proclamation, Come, let all the world see the power of my mercy, and the good will that is in my bowels, that I can wash such a stained soul that is nothing else but sin, that I will pardon such an old inveterate sinner; Now by how much thy sins are more and greater, by so much God more sets out the vertue of his balm, in healing such old putrified stinking wounds. 1

Secondly, *God knows, such sinners once pardoned and changed, will more glorifie him.* They that have much forgiven, *will love much.* Luk. 7. 47. 2.

Thirdly, *God shall have glory from such a sinner, in that others by his example, shall be kept from despair, and quickned to leave their sins, and trust in Gods mercy, Psal.* 34. 6. & 51. 13. Come therefore, beleeve, rest on Christ, Let not thy unworthiness, thy great, thy many sins, keep thee from Christ. *Eusebius* in his third book of Eccles. Hist. cap. 20. hath a story of *John* the Apostle, who at *Ephesus* finding a young man of a goodly body, gracious face, and fervent minde, commended him to one of the Bishops or Elders to take care of him; The Elder accordingly did instruct him, and at length baptized him; This young man afterwards became very wicked, and dissolute, seduced by wicked companions: First, became a companion of their feasts and cups, and then of their thieving, and robberies; at last grew to a very great height of disorder and outrage, and became a robber on the mountains. *John* returning to *Ephesus*, enquiring for the young man of the Elder, hears this news; Saint *John* after rebuking the Elder for his negligence, rode to the mountain, which this young man (now grown to be a Captain of robbers) kept, Saint *John* being taken of the thievish watch, desired to be brought to their Captain, and accordingly was; when he saw him coming, and knew it was *John*, he was stricken with shame, and fled away; *Euseb. Eccles. hist. l.* 3. *c.* 20.

away; Saint *John* purſueth after him, crying, *My ſon, why flyeſt thou from thy father? O ſon, tender my caſe, be not afraid, as yet there remaineth hope of ſalvation, I will undertake for thee with Chriſt, I will dye for thee if need be as Chriſt dyed for us, I will hazard my ſoul for thine, truſt to me, Chriſt hath ſent me.* He hearing this, ſtood ſtill, trembled, and wept, embraced Saint *John*, and wept bitterly. The Apoſtle, when he had promiſed, and proteſted to procure pardon for him of our Saviour, prayed upon his knees, kiſſed him, and brings him to the Church, preacheth to him, faſts with him, and leaves him not, before he had reſtored him a penitent beleever. Is this thy condition Chriſtian? haſt thou been well principled? and haſt thou forgot all the Sermons and admonitions, given or preacht to thee, and art thou turned diſſolute diſorderly, guilty of all wickedneſſe? and now inſtead of coming to Chriſt by Faith, doeſt thou, wouldſt thou fly from him? See thy Chriſt purſuing thee, calling, inviting, *Ah, why doeſt thou fly from me, that dyed for thee? turn, turn, beleeve, be not afraid, as yet there remaineth hope of ſalvation in my merits, I will undertake with my father for thee, I have dyed for thee, I will hazzard my favour with my father for thine; truſt to me, O now ſtand ſtill, tremble, weep, pray, turn, truſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: Thou art unworthy, but Chriſt is worthy, he hath grace ſufficient for thee; He hath a good will to ſave thee, yea, eagerly bent to thy ſalvation; he perſwades, he ſwears, he pleades, he appeals, he wiſhes groaning, he profeſſeth he knows not how to deſtroy thee; he weeps over thee, he invites thee, he comes from heaven to call thee, he dies for thee, he ſends meſſengers to invite thee, he hath waſhed as filthy wretches as thou art; If he hath not, yet he can, he never ſhewed the utmoſt of his free-grace, he hath as much reaſon to ſave thee, as ever he had to ſave any of his Saints, for themſelves. He never took penny-worth of merit with any;

any; He shall have the more glory, by how much thou art more unworthy; Free-grace shall more shew it self; Thou (if once forgiven) wilt love him the more; Other great sinners will be ready to trust in him from thy example. Come now, turn, beleeve, eschew evill, do good, *Though your sins were as scarlet, they shall be as snow, Though as crimson, they shall be white as wooll.*

SERM. IIII.

ROM. 10. 6.

Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into Heaven?

I Am come to treat of a third mistaken ground of Faith.

1. Some Christians dare not cast themselves upon the Lord Jesus Christ, because they conceive they are not enough humbled.

2. Others dare not, because they conceive they are unworthy, and their sins are too many and too great. Both these mistake by conceiving that something in themselves should be a ground of Faith

3. There are a third sort that dare not beleeve; and what hinders? this is it; they have heard that God hath from all eternity by an eternall purpose according to the counsell of his will ordain'd and determin'd to eternall life, and others he hath past over: now they know if they be not elected, they cannot be saved, and till they know

know or have some evidence, that God hath chosen them in Christ before the foundation of the world, they conceive they have no ground to venture upon the promise, to cast themselves upon the Lord Jesus, &c. they say in their heart, *Who shall ascend unto heaven*: If indeed we could see the records of Eternity, and read our names in the book of Life, then we might beleeve: To these now saith our Apostle here:

Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down from above.

I shall now come directly to speak to the subject.

Quis scit an nos hæreditas illa æternæ ac cœlestis vitæ maneat. Calv. *ad loc.*

Cap. 4.

How such Christians may be satisfied and comforted, as think they have no warrant to beleeve, because they conceive they are not elected, or do not know whether they be elected or no?

Alas! saith a poor Christian, why do you tell mee of beleeving? Sure I am, none can bee saved, that is not elected; I can see no ground to make me think, that God hath chosen me to life, before the foundations of the world; nay, I am confident God hath not elected me, but past mee over in his eternall decree. Now to this trouble of spirit, I will speak something: first, by way of premise; secondly, by way of consolation and direction.

First, *By way of premise.* It is an ill way of curing such a wound, by breaking truths head, to make a plaister; as the Arminians, Papists, and Antinomians do. Let mee therefore, first, shew you what the truth is, and then 1

shew you, with what considerations, in a consistency with the truth, a Christian so unwarrantably by this scruple stopt in his way of beleeving, may be set a going again; and there will be left an even path upon the road of truth for a troubled spirit to goe on in its way of beleeving, and that both steadily, *and* nimbly. Know therefore,

1. First, It is a truth, *That from all eternity, God made choice of a particular and determinate number of persons, to save them and none other; nor can any be saved, but those who were so elected, and whosoever are so elected, shall not fall away.* This is the truth of God, which must stand firm against whosoever they bee, that either say there is no election, or an election at random; (as the Arminians hold) or a slippery one, that is, alterable, (as Papists hold) or that it is made in time, &c.

2. Secondly, It is a truth, *That God never elected any because he foresaw they would beleeve, and repent, and walk holily; but because he hath elected them, therefore they beleeve, and repent. &c.*

3. Thirdly, It is a truth, *That those that are thus from all eternity elected, may come to know, and particularly, and fully, and assuredly to know, they are so elected, and chosen of God.*

4. Nay Fourthly, It is a truth, *That it is the duty of every Christian, to strive to make his calling and election sure, to labour to know that his name is written in the book of life.* It is that which the Apostle *Peter* cals for at Christians hands.

5. Nay fifthly, It is a truth, *That there are but a very few elected, and whosoever is elected, shall beleeve, and more then are elected, neither can nor shall beleeve; Many are called and few are chosen;* and those that are ordained to the end, are ordained to the means, they are *created to good works.* These are those propositions which I desired to premise, and those which the Devill and his instru-

ments abuse, to the unwarrantable perplexing of poore soules, These are (all) the truths of God, which do and shall remaine true, though all the world be found liars; but what of all this? I know none of these premises that will warrant such a conclusion as this, *Then I have no ground to beleeve, except I knew that I were one of those few, whose names God hath written in his book of eternity.* The Papist, and Arminian, and Libertines, now take another course, to cure the perplexed spirit, and make no bones of it, to slay a truth, to heale a conscience. To this end, they have devised such charmes to hang about the necks of sick soules, as these are, *There is no such matter as any decree of election, or God elects us for foreseen works*; and if there bee an election, it is not particular, but the decree is entred thus at random, in the Court rols of eternity. *All that beleeve shall bee saved*, without a particular entrance of the number or names, as if God had not said, *I know thee by name*; and if there bee any elected, they stand upon slippery ground, *Elected names may bee blotted out, or added in*; as if Gods Booke were more blotted then a Mercers shop-book. Or if there be any elected, yet, *it is impossible to know that I am elected, nor can I have any assurance of my mansion-house in glory, till I have taken possession of it.* But this is to bruise the head, for a plaister for the heele. On the contrary, another generation maintain, election to be the object of Faith, and ignorantly maintain, *Faith to be the eye of the soule, reading its name written in Gods book from all eternity, an apprehension of our particular election, &c.* But, as these doe unwarrantably wound tender consciences, so the other are bad chirurgions to heal such wounds. If I mistake not, we shall find cordials enough to refresh such swooning spirits, without buying them at so dear a rate, as the sale of a dram of precious truth. Therefore leaving these premises, to be held and maintained, as the sure

pillars of eternall truth, I come in the next place to propound some considerations that may comfort and satisfie poor souls, thus unwarrantably troubling themselves, [*salva veritate Dei*] the head of truth yet remaining without a wound or scar. That is my next work, and to that end consider:

First, Thou sayest, *If I knew I were one of those that God had elected, then indeed I had some ground, in order to my salvation, to relie upon the promises; but unlesse I be elected such reliance will be rather a fond and unwarrantable presumption, then a warranted and well-grounded Faith.*

1. First, Consider, (Christian!) *That Faith is not an apprehension of particular election, but an application of generall promises.* Thou art mistaken (without any ground) in the object of true Faith, Christ calleth upon all, to whom the Lord Jesus Christ is preached, in his Gospel, to beleeve. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, and buy.* Isai. 55. 1. 2. *John* was sent *to bear witnesse of the truth, that all men through him might beleeve,* Joh. 6. 29. Christ layeth it as a duty upon all the people, *That they should beleeve on him whom God had sent.* 1 Ioh. 7. Joh. 6. 29. Now can we imagine, that the meaning of Christ was, that they should beleeve, that all of their names from eternity, were in the Court-rolls of eternity. The Gospel obligeth all that hear it, to beleeve; but doth the Gospel lay an obligation upon any, to beleeve a lye? Faiths object is the promises of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Faiths work in the soul, not to close with the decree of God, and to bosome that, but to close with the promises, and imbrace them. It is Faiths work, to eye Christ, in a particular apprehension, through the prospective of a promise, not to eye Christ, as the souls Saviour, through the mystery of Gods predeterminate purposes, *Heb.* 10. 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith, without wavering*; well, but upon what grounds, the next words tell us, *For he is faithfull,* Heb. 10. 23.

that

that hath promised, the *sure word*, not the *sure decree* of God, is the object of our justifying Faith. Now, where hath God left thee such a line of promise as this? *Thou shalt be elected to glory*, or, *I will elect thee to glory*. God hath said, I will pardon, *I will heal, I will ease you*; and these words, God calls thee to rest upon, as sure and faithfull words: God hath said, *He that beleeveth on the Son, hath everlasting life*; but he hath never said, *He that beleeveth in my decree, hath everlasting life*. Indeed, if our election were that which were to be the first thing to be beleeved, it were somthing to scruple a Christian, and it would bee enquired into how wee should know that we are elect; for it is necessary, that we have some certainty of knowledge of that which is to be beleeved, that it should be evident to us; but there is no such matter. The promises of the Lord Jesus Christ, are our object, which not being particular, but generall, make our way smooth; As for example, we have a promise, *Ioh.3.16. Whosoever beleeves in him, shall not perish but have eternall life*. This promise now, it is thy work to beleeve, *viz.* that beleeving in him, *I shall not perish, but have everlasting life*. Doest thou say, how shall I know this promise is made to me? what ground hast thou for that question? when as in the promise, *there* is no restriction, *Whosoever beleeves*. The writing runs, *To all persons to whom these presents come*, what should they do? beleeve in the *Lord Iesus*; rest and rely upon the Lord Jesus Christ, *for eternall life*. The generall promise is by thee particularly to be applyed. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden* (saith Christ) *and I will ease you*. This is now thy duty, to come unto Christ, but sayest thou, I cannot come, I do not know I am elected; Christian, does Christ say, *Come unto me all you that are elected, and I will ease you*? No he saith, *Come unto me all you that are weary*. Suppose a man had an intention to give to such a particular number

Ioh.2.36.

Ioh.3.16.

Mat.5.29.

of

of persons, such a quantity of money, and were resolved with himself, to give to none other but those, yet should make a Proclamation, that whosoever came to him acknowledging their poverty, he would relieve, in the mean while, secretly with himself determining, not to give a penny to any, but those whose names he had in his book, and who should come; and knowing that none of the rest would come, but be too proud to come and take it, were it warrant enough for any to refuse coming upon this score? *I hear he hath made a book, and though he makes a generall offer, yet he will give but to a few persons, and for my part I do not think I am one of them. If he will send me word, I am one of those whose name is in his book, I care not though I go.* It is thy case Christian, apply it in secret; wilt thou not beleeve and go to Christ, because thou doest not know thou art particularly elected? fear lest for this cause *salvation* be denyed thee. But so much for the first,

Simile.

2. Secondly, Consider, *That thy election cannot be known to thee, till thou doest beleeve.* Papists say, It cannot at all be known assuredly to thee, till thou comest to see thy name in heaven thy self; but that is false; but this is truth, that till thou doest beleeve, thou canst never know whether thou beest elected or no. The eternall decrees of God, are only demonstrable to us [*à posteriori*] from the effects, who hath ascended up unto heaven at any time, to search the records of eternity?

Ioh.6.46. First, *All that are created of God is by the Son, Ioh. 6. 46.* No man hath *seen the father save he which is of God, he hath seen the father.* Not can any thing be known of

Mat.11.27. the father, but by the Son, *Mat. 11. 27.* Now, where hath the Son revealed the fathers secret decrees any where? when there was but a question concerning the time of those great things mentioned, *Mat. 24. 36. v. 1.*

Mat.24.36. Christ tells them, *v. 36. Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no nor the Angels, nor the Son,* Mark 13. 32. *but*

the

the father only. Whether the Son as man, did not know Gods secrets so far, or whether (according to *Aquinas*) *ideo dicitur nescire, quia non scire non facit*, he therefore may be said not to know, because he will not suffer us to know, I shall not dispute, either of both will serve our turn; Gods particular decree of election, is a secret, lockt up in the bosome of him who is the ancient of dayes, of which, either Christ himself [as man] was ignorant, or concerning which (to be sure) he was so secret, as never to reveal his fathers thoughts; he was indeed (as God) the Privy counsellor of eternity, but a secret keeper of his fathers thoughts, and counsels, as well as an obedient Son to his commands in revealing his fathers will: Christ indeed tells his Disciples, *He had chosen them*, but it was though, not because they beleeved that he chose them, yet after that hee had called them, and they were come to him, and had walked constantly and obediently with him, that he told them so, Christ hath not revealed particular election to any before Faith. Ioh. 15. 16.

Secondly, Nor *ever will he.* Will Christ think you ever reveal the secrets of eternity to those that actually are his utter enemies? Election is one of Gods secrets, it is the roll wherein the eternall covenant, betwixt this or that particular soul, and the King of eternall glory, is written, and inrolled: Now the Scripture indeed saith, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* But hath the Scripture ever said, the secrets of the Lord are with unbeleeving damned wretches? for (he that beleeveth not is damned already) no, when the soul is once called, and beleeves on the Lord Jesus Christ, then God in his due time reveals the secrets of eternity to such a soul, & puts it on spectacles to read the particular covenant, that he hath made, entred, and enrolled in the court of heaven, which is written in small and invisible characters, and cannot be Psal. 25 14.

read but with enlightned eyes, guided by the eternal spirit. Besides,

Thirdly, Consider *the phrase of Scripture*, how it doth reveal to us our *particular election*. *Peter* calls to them, to *Strive to make their calling and election sure*. First your calling, then your election, 1 *Ioh.* 2. 5. & 3. 6, 10. It is the constant language of Scripture, and the sense of all the Apostles, that by our Faith, and fruits of our sanctification, which are the consequents, and attendants upon Faith, we must know, whether we be in God, or no; whether we be the sons of God, or no; our particular election must be known to us by the effects; doest thou therefore stick at this? I must know that I am elected, otherwise I cannot beleeve, thou cutteſt off the means by which thou shouldst attain to thy end. Thy end is to know thy election. Now the means by which thou shouldst attain to this particular knowledge and assurance, must be Faith and the fruits of it: This thou casts off, a thing so absurd that thou wouldst condemn it in any worldly matter.

1 Ioh. 2. 5.
3 Cha. v. 6, 10.

3 Consid.

Thirdly, *Consider thou hast no ground for thee to think thou art not elected, unlesse it be thy unbeleef.* God hath made open Proclamation: *Whosoever beleeveth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life: Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise turn him away.* Let all come, and I will ease you. Suppose a King should make a Proclamation concerning some Malefactors: *Let every one that will, come to me and beg his pardon, and he shall have it.* Though he hath a secret reservation of thoughts in his bosome to pardon none but such and such, because he is confident the rest will be too proud and stout to come; yet upon what justifiable ground shall any Malefactor think the King intends not to pardon him before he comes to him and humbly begs his pardon: Shall he stand, and at a distance say, Let the King send me a particular pardon, and then I will come for

for it and thank him; but till I am ſure he intendeth to give it, I will never take the paines to go. Upon what grounds ſhall ſuch a malefactor think the King intends not to give him his life? hath he not good cauſe to think his ſtoutneſſe is the cleareſt and proximate cauſe? God ſaith come, beleeve, and you ſhall live; Thou ſaieſt now, no, I do not think I ſhall live, let mee know that, and then I will beleeve; what ground haſt thou to think thou ſhalt not have the end, but becauſe thou wilt not uſe the meanes? Suppoſe a man lay very ſicke, his Phyſicians ſhould preſcribe him ſuch and ſuch meanes, in order to his recovery; no not he, he remembers, *His time is in Gods hand, and he cannot paſſe it*, hee is ſure, hee will ſee firſt whether God will let him live, or no, and if God will ſend him a leaſe of his life, then he will uſe meanes. Suppoſe now ſuch a man ſhould die, what might any think the cauſe why hee dyed ſo ſoon? What? the period that God had ſet to his daies? or his own refuſing the meanes to ſuſtain his life? But this will be further enlarged in a fifth conſideration.

3.

Fourthly, Conſider but this, *That all thoſe whom God hath elected, he hath not onely elected to the end, but to the meanes.* Gods eternall decree of election, is not entred thus in the Court-book, *Bee it ordained, that ſuch and ſuch a perſon ſhall live eternally*: But, bee it ordained, *That ſuch or ſuch a perſon, ſhall in time bee called, and believe the Goſpel, and walke holily like one of my children, and after receive the Crowne of glory.* Wee were predeſtinated, *That wee ſhould bee to the praiſe of his glory*, Eph. 1.12. & 2.10. *For wee are his workmanſhip, created in Jeſus Chriſt unto good workes, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.* God hath ordained the meanes, as well as the end, and you muſt firſt know by your calling and beleeving, that you are elected to them, before you can know you are elected to eternall life: the ſame God that hath made it a

4.

decree of eternity, this and that man ſhall bee ſaved, hath alſo made it a decree, that this or that man ſhould believe. Beleeving that I am elected and one choſen of God to eternall life, is a piece of ſenſe, not of juſtifying Faith (ſaith learned and pious *Rutherford*) and it is a piece of ſenſe too, to thinke I beleeve, as I have at large heretofore ſhewed, but it is an higher thing, to beleeve and bee fully perſwaded that I ſhall infallibly be ſaved, then to think I truly beleeve, it is a ſtep higher; the demonſtration is plaine, becauſe no Chriſtian can think that he ſhall bee undoubtedly ſaved, unleſs he thinks, firſt, that he doth truly and ſavingly beleeve. Now therefore thy firſt worke muſt bee to get a ſenſe of Faith, to beleeve that thou beleeveſt; for thou wilt never know that God hath ordained thee to life, unleſſe thou firſt know that he hath ordained thee to beleeve, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtaine ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, by beleeving in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore we are ſaid *to be elected in Chriſt*, that is, to obtain ſalvation in Chriſt, and by beleeving in Chriſt, which is the true ſenſe of that place, *what ever Arminians wreſt it for.* But I paſſe on to a fifth.

5. 5. Conſider, *That by ſtanding at this ſcruple, thou doeſt not onely ſinnefully, and unwarrantably, and endleſly perplex thy ſelfe, and hinder thine owne ſoules peace, but alſo thou calleſt in queſtion Gods wiſdome, and ſtandereſt his charters of free grace.* Firſt, thou calleſt in queſtion Gods wiſdom.

1. 1. *God in his wiſdome hath thought it fit, that his particular election of any ſoule to eternall life, ſhould bee concealed from it till it hath beleeved*, to let Faith go before ſenſe; thou ſayeſt no, but it is better for me to know I am elected, and then I have ground of beleeving: God ſaith, beleeve, and then *thou* ſhalt ſee, and this is the way of his wiſdome with ſoules: thou ſayeſt,

no,

no, let me see, and then I will beleeve: God saith, trust me, I will bee faithfull; thou saiest, no, I will not trust thee a jot further then I can see thee.

2. *God in his wisdome hath thought it a sufficient ground for a soule to beleeve in him, and trust to him, that in the promulgation of his Gospel, he hath shut none out of heaven, that have not shut out themselves.* Thou saiest, no, I will know whether God hath shut me out, before God shall know whether I will shut out my selfe, or no; God judgeth it most fit, that the sinner should speake first, and tell him, whether hee will accept of his grace tendred, or no; thou saist no, but I will know first, whether God that hath made his large tenders of grace, will make good what he tenders, nay, thou standest upon Gods seal, as if thou durst not trust his word; God sends his proclamation, and causeth it to be proclamed in thine ears; thou saist, This is not enough, let me have his broad-seal. 2.

Secondly, Nay, herein *Thou slanderest his charters of free-grace,* Those say, *Whosoever beleeveth shall live*; thou saiest, in effect, no; for if I be not elected, nay, if I do not know I am elected, I can have no ground to beleeve; what dost thou but slander the charter of free-grace; as invalid and insufficient, and good for nothing? and is it fitting that the creature should thus deale with the Creator? 2.

6. *If thou wilt but believe, nothing that is in Gods decree, shall or can hinder thee of salvation*: The whole Gospel runs in this language, *Whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Hee that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.* Lay thy damnation, Christian, to Gods charge, if beleeving thou perishest. *O Israel* (saith God) *thy damnation is of thy selfe.* Never feare it Christian, God will wash his hands and clear his word too, of thy blood, as any sinners in the world: The righteous Judge of the whole earth will 6. Ioh. 3. 16, 39. & 6. 40, 47. & 11. 25.

will do no unrighteous action, neither shall any falshood proceed out of his lips, *Hee is not as man that he should lie.* Thou shalt never, nor shall any damned creature ever say, if the thread of Gods word had not broke, I had not falne into this pit. Thy damnation shall be of thy self, not of him, nor for any failing of his faithfulnesse.

Lastly, Consider, *Heaven and glory are not so inconsiderable things, but they are worth adventuring for, if thou hadst but a possibility of obtaining them, though thou hadst no certainty.* Thou saist, except I were sure God had elected me, to what purpose should I beleeve? unlesse I bee pre-ordain'd to salvation, it is impossible I should be saved. Christian! hast thou so cheap and low thoughts of heaven and glory? a vain student, that hath but heard of such a thing, as a Philosophers stone, which they say hath a vertue in it, to turne other metals into gold, he hath but heard that there is such a thing to be found out, or perhaps doth but fancy such a thing findable, with the expence of much time and study, and money; he upon this conceit, laies out a great deale of his estate, expends a great deale of time, thinks no time too much to spend, no money too much to be expended to try a conclusion; hee hath no certaine confidence perhaps of such a things possibility; however, no certainty, that he hath found out the very way of finding it: perhaps, hee hath many discouragements from divers that have spent their estates, busied their braines, lost abundance of time, and yet never could find it, yet he goes on, carried on with a strong fancy, hoping not to fail. Queen *Esther*, when she went in to the King, had no certainty of finding favour, yea, she wanted not some disheartnings, in regard of a custome in the Court of *Persia*, that none should come in to the King, till they were called, and yet more, she had not been called of thirty dayes: (an extraordinary time) Yet

see

see her resolution, her businesse was extraordinary, many lives depended upon her venturing her life, she puts on a gallant resolution to go in, and saith, *If I perish, I perish*, and God blessed her enterprize, and she obtained the holding out of the golden Scepter, and the answer of her desire. Thou saist, *I am not sure I am elected*; I say yet, *believe*, Thou art or mayest bee sure, if thou doest beleeve, thou shalt live; thou hast the word of God for it; It is but the expence of a little time in praying, hearing, fasting, &c. Never was there one experience of one, that beleeved and was damned, to dishearten thee; God calls thee to it, if thou dost not, not the lives of others but thy own soule is in danger of perishing; God hath promised the golden Scepter, Heaven and Christ, are worth venturing more for, then thou canst adventure: Go in, resolve to rest upon Christ, doe it truly, and my soule for thine if thou perishest. Thus I have shortly endeavoured to speake something, how little soever, and in how much weaknesse soever, to poore souls pleading this bar to Faith: Consider of it, you see this still remaines the great work of a Christian to obey Gods revealed Law, not to search into his secret will: Hear O man! what God hath required of thee, *Beleeve and be saved*, make not blocks in thine owne way. Art thou weary and heavy laden? come unto him that saith, *Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you*: Ah! but (wilt thou say) I am a poore vile unworthy wretch, what have I to do to rest my impure hands upon a pure Christ? But for this I shall God willing, speak something the next time.

SERM.

SERM. V.

MAT. 12.31.

All sin and blasphemy shall bee forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not bee forgiven to men.

I Have told you some are hindred in their coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, from a mistake of the true grounds of Faith.

Some again from a mistake of their own condition. I have done with the former; I am now come to Satans last block, that hee ordinarily laies for the Beleever, to stumble upon in the way of beleeving; when he cannot perswade them to despaire of their interest in Gods hidden decree, nor yet in regard of the hardnesse of their owne heart, nor yet in respect of their unworthinesse to keep from Christ. But the poor soul looks above all these, to the Lord Jesus Christ, then hee shoots his last arrow, by suggesting to the soule such thoughts as these. But what

if

if I have sinned against the Holy Ghost? That generall rule, *Mat.* 12. 31. *All sin and blasphemy shall bee forgiven*, hath a particular exception, *But whosoever blasphemes the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven.* And if I be within that, I have nothing to do with the generall promise. Now Sathan having here to do with a poor credulous soule, that is far easier to beleeve evill, then any good of it selfe, hath the fuller blow at it, and followes on while the iron is hot, he knowes if he can but juggle the soule into this perswasion, beleeving is at an end. And as there are very many, whom hee either first or last, batters with this engine of death; so in regard of the weakenesse and ignorance of the most of Christians, especially in the beginning of their conversion, there are not a few that are wounded with this dart, and will hardly bee beaten out of that groundlesse conceit, that they have really, and indeed sinned that unpardonable sinne against the Holy Ghost, which occasions (possibly) many a dayes sadnesse and dejection groundlesly. Now in regard that this temptation is entertained ordinarily through a defect of knowledge and understanding, of what ingredients that compounded wickednes is made of, I shall in speaking to the satisfaction of a poore soule under this complaint, speake something concerning the nature of that sinne, which if once truly understood, will be enough of it selfe, to let such poore souls see how groundlesly they have yeelded to that temptation of Sathan.

Cap. 5.

How to ſatisfie a poor ſoule that conceives, that it hath ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy ghoſt, and therefore ought not, may not beleeve.

The complaint

ALas! (ſaith a poor Chriſtian) *Why do you tell me of beleeving? I know ſir, there is a fulneſſe and freeneſſe of mercy in Jeſus Chriſt, for poore ſinners, yea, though their ſins be many and great: But I am ſure, the ſin againſt the Holy ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven, and I am confident that very ſin have I committed. I have ſinned againſt light and knowledge, I have had blaſphemous thoughs, and have in heart denyed Chriſt, and been tempted to deny the truth of Jeſus Chriſt, &c.*

Now to the ſatisfaction of a poor ſoule under this perplexity of ſpirit, let me ſpeak ſomething: Firſt, By way of premiſe; Secondly, By way of conſideration.

1. By way of Premiſe, *It is a truth that there is ſuch a ſin may be committed, as is the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt, and being committed, it is unpardonable.* That ſuch a ſin there is, is plain from ſeverall places of Scripture, *Mat.* 12. 31. *But the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven men.* *Mark* and *Luke* both make mention of the ſame paſſage of truth from our Saviours mouth, *Mar.* 3. 28. *Luke* 12. 10. The Apoſtle *John* makes alſo mention of it, 1 *John* 5. 16. *There is a ſin to the death*; And the Apoſtle to the *Hebrewes*, in two Chapters, makes a more full and ſpecificall diſcovery, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6, 7. & 10. 26, 27. It is called the ſinne againſt the Holy Ghoſt, not that it is onely againſt the third perſon in the Trinity, who is the Holy Spirit, for the ſin is againſt the whole Trinity, the three perſons ma-

1.
Chryſoſtome thinks it is cal'd unpardonable, becauſe it is not eaſily pardoned.
Mat. 12. 31.
Mar. 3. 28.
Luke 12. 10.
1 John 5. 16.

Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. & 10. 26, 27.
Uſher.
Urſin.
Parent.

making but one divine Eſſence; but becauſe it is a direct oppoſition, and reſiſtance of the light of knowledge, with which the Holy Ghoſt hath enlightned the heart of him that hath committed it; for although the worke of enlightning, bee a worke of the God-head, without it ſelfe, and ſo a work of all the three perſons joyntly, according to the knowne rule of Divinity; yet it is a worke which in the order of working, is ordinarily attributed to the third perſon in Trinity. There is ſuch a ſin called by Chriſt, *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, he being that Perſon, whoſe office it is, in the order of the God-heads working, to enlighten the mindes with knowledge of the truth, *Eph.*1.17, 18. *Heb.* 6.4.——Secondly, this ſin once committed is unpardonable: this is alſo directly proved from thoſe forementioned places in the Goſpel, *Mat.* 12, 31. *&c. Heb.* 6.4. And therefore is called by the Apoſtle *John*, *The ſin unto death*, In reſpect of the end and puniſhment of it.

Opera Trinitatis ad extra ſunt indiviſa.

Severall of the Fathers, and ſo *Maldonat* and *Brentius* think it is ſaid to be unpardonable, becauſe it cannot be excus'd Eph.1.17,18. Heb.6.4. 1 Iohn 5.16.

Secondly, *It is as true that the elect ones cannot commit this ſin, or ever be guilty of it.* Chriſt hath ſaid, *He hath given unto them eternall life, and they ſhall not periſh. The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. They ſhall bee kept *through the power of God unto ſalvation*, 1 *Pet.*1.5. They that fall away were never in, nor ever of the number of the elect; for *if they had been of them, they would (no doubt) have continued with them. But in that they go out and fall away, it is that they might be made manifeſt they were not of them*, 1 Epiſt. of *John* 2. 19. Who ſo ſin that ſin, Firſt, *Can never be ſaved*, Chriſt hath ſaid, *Theſe ſhall never periſh*: Secondly, *They can never repent and beleeve.* Chriſt hath ordained, that the elect ſhall repent, and beleeve, and although they may ſlip, and fall, yet hee hath ordained they ſhall riſe againe, and by repentance be recovered. Theſe things being premiſed, Let mee

2. Iohn 10.28. 2 Tim.2.19. 1 Pet. 1.5.

come in the next place to propound some considerations, that being seriously meditated and made use of, may serve to stay, and comfort, and settle the hearts of such Christians, as yeelding to this temptation, have troubled and perplexed their own spirits.

1 First of all consider, *That as it is a certain truth, that there is such a sin committible, that a creature may bee guilty of, yet it is as uncertain what this sin is*, witness the various descriptions of it by the School-men: and *Augustine* and *Calvin*, *Bullinger* and *Brentius*, scarce any two agreeing. *Austine* thinks it one of the greatest questions in Scripture, and in five severall places follows so many different opinions: see the various opinions concerning this sin in *Muldonat* in Matth. 12. 31. None ever could yet determine it, or if they have done it, it hath been unwarrantably, I mean for the specificall sin; Innumerable almost have been the opinions of the Antients; Some have thought it to be *malice against the Brethrens graces*; others, *Finall impenitency*; others, despair of Gods mercy. The Papists make six species of it.

1. *Impenitency.*

2. *Despair:* (these two seem to be but consequents of it.)

3. *Obstinacy in wickedness:* (All obstinacy in wickednesse cannot be, and how high, what degree of obstinacy constitutes it, they leave us to seek.)

4. *The resisting of a known truth:* This comes nearest it; but yet for the heighth and degree of resistance they also leave us in the dark, and every resistance is not.

5. *The malice against our Brethren for grace and goodnesse:* This hath something in it tending to it, but reacheth not the full neither.

6. *Assuming out of presumption of Gods mercy.* That presumption is an ingredient in this sin is certain, and that

Aqu. 2. 2. q. 14 Art. 2.

the

the sin against the Holy-ghost, is a sin of presumption; but every sinning upon presumption of Gods mercy, certainly is not unpardonable: It is certain, that blasphemy against the Holy-ghost may be variously taken.

First, *Literally, when any blasphemous speech is spoken against the Holy-ghost.* As if any should maintain the Holy-ghost is not God, &c. So many of the antient fathers took it.

Secondly, *It is sometimes, and so we take it to be, meant here for a sin against the Holy-ghosts proper operations and workings*, as his enlightning grace, &c. *Heb.* 4. 6, 7. For whosoever sins the first way, sins not unpardonably, though dangerously; as Saint *Austine* largely proves, that the Texts, *Mat.* 12. 31. &c. are not to be meant of every blasphemous word, but there is (*quadam blasphemia, & quoddam verbum*) a certain word, and a certain kinde of blasphemy: Now what this is, that we are in the dark for, nor have any (except the Papists unwarrantably) dared certainly to define or describe it, so as to say, This is the unpardonable sin; Now therefore, Christian, upon what ground doest thou say, *Thou hast sinned the sin against the Holy-ghost*, when neither thou nor any other can say, this or that is the sin against the Holy-ghost? why doest thou accuse the soul of thou knowest not what? Judge if this be not an irrationall yielding to a groundless temptation. But saith a poor Christian, *I have refused the enlightning Spirit, I have refused instruction, and hated reproofe, and thus in this, but the unpardonable sin I am I have sinned against knowledge, sin so and such a truth I have denied, disputed against it, &c.* To make therefore a little progresse, though positively it cannot be said, nor specifically determined, what the sin against the Holy-ghost is, that is unpardonable (for it is certain, that every sin against the Holy-ghost, is not unpardonable, A lye against know-

Aug. T. 10. Ser. 11. de Verbis Dom. p. 47. copiosè tractat.

ledge, is a ſin againſt the Holy-ghoſt, *Act.* 5. 3. yet not unpardonable, Jacob committed it for the bleſſing:) Yet,

1. It may be ſhewne negatively, what it is not.

2. Several ingredients may be diſcovered, that muſt be in this compound of iniquity. And in relation to thy complaint, conſider,

2. *In Spiritum vero non maledicit niſi qui ab eo illuminatus impiæ rebellionis ſibi conſcius eſt.* Calv. in Harm. 158.

Secondly, *That none can be guilty of it, but ſuch as have had a great meaſure of knowledge of Gods truth,* Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. They muſt be ſuch as have been *enlightned*, that is, ſuch as the Goſpel hath been preacht too, and received by, ſo that it hath cleared up his underſtanding from that darkneſſe and miſt of naturall blindneſſe and ignorance, in which *Adams* fall left us.

2. Secondly, *Such as have taſted of the heavenly gift*, that is, *Faith* (ſaith *Parens*) ſuch as having heard the word, have not onely been convinced of it, but given a firm aſſent of Faith to it; for it can onely be underſtood of a temporary Faith of aſſent, not of true juſtifying Faith, for that in whomſoever it is, *is kept by the power of God to ſalvation*, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

3. Heb. 10. 26. Thirdly, *Such as have taſted of the good word of God*, Such as have had the Goſpel preacht to them, and have apprehended it good and ſweet, received it with joy; *Heard it gladly* (as *Herod*) *Heb.* 10. 26. They muſt be ſuch as have received the knowledge of the Truth; It muſt be a defection, and a declination from knowledge, and a profeſſion, as is clear from that place, *Heb.* 10. 26. from whence is plain, that a naturall man that never was enlightned, or an heathen that never heard the word of God, or thoſe that though they have heard, yet have not had hearts to regard and receive what they hear, and give aſſent to it, Theſe cannot be guilty of this unpardonable ſin; why doeſt thou therefore trouble thy ſelf, that *thou haſt refuſed the Goſpel, and therefore thou haſt ſinned*

and the sin against the Holy-ghost, When the Gospel was never made known to thee, so far as to enlighten thee? possibly thou heardst the word, but understoodst not, regardedst nothing. Those that crucified Christ, were converted at *Peters* Sermon, *Act.* 2. have thine ears been stopt to the means of grace? be humbled for it, but dispair not because of it, though thou beest called at the ninth hour, yet if thou wilt come in at the eleventh, thou shalt be received, and welcome, only come. God winked at the time of thy ignorance, *Act.* 17.30. This sin must be against the word, heard, received, tasted, &c. It is not a bare piece of originall corruption, consisting in a privation of knowledge, or averseness unto knowledge, or vanity of heart in not regarding knowledge; but it is the highest piece of actuall rebellion, not for a while to stand at a distance from a pardon offered, but to begin to reach out an hand to take it, and then draw back, and spit in the face of that God that offers thee; This is plain, for it is a blasphemy against the Holy-ghost in his workings; now the spirit doth not alwayes work with the preaching of the word, much lesse is the law of nature the work of the sanctifying spirit: But the work of illumination and sanctification, those are the spirits works, in which we must take heed of opposing him. This sin is not petty-larceny, but high-treason against God. But *alas! will a poor Christian say, yet I fear, for I have received and tasted the word of truth, and I have made a shew of rejoycing in the good word of God, and after this have I been in my heart, thinking to deny Christ to be the Saviour of the world, to deny the word to be the word of truth*, and sinned against knowledge. Act.17.30.

Thirdly, Therefore consider, *This sin which is the unpardonable sin, must be a sated sin of thy own, continued in without repentance, & will be more then a sin of thy heart.* That it is first begot in the heart, as all other sin is, is a truth, but it goeth out of it; blasphemy is properly commit- 3. v. Bullinger. ad Matt. 12. v. Calv. in Harm. ad Matth. 12.

mitted with the tongue, without question, the heart, and tongue, and hand, have all a portion in this sin unpardonable, but it is not in the thought onely: Besides, 2. *It may be thy blasphemous thoughts, which thou hast in thy heart, are none of thine own*; for such thoughts there are oft times in a Christian, that are meerly cast in by Sathan into the soul, neither bred in, nor nursed by the soul, not delighted in, but are like the childe that was dead, laid (by the true mother) by another womans side. It is a little question, whether these thoughts be sins, or no? if spurned out, and rejected by thee; whether they shall be put upon thine, or upon Sathans score, to answer for? It is by all granted, that if they be sins, they are the least of sins; as suppose I should have a thought in my heart, that *there is no Christ, but he whom the Gospel speaks of were an impostor*; I know not how this thought came there, I have a suggestion to believe it, but my heart rises against it, cries *avoid Sathan*, I pray against it, humble my self, that my base heart should ever have such a guest for my part; I make a great question, whether these thoughts be a souls sins, any more then if a strumpet should come and lay a childe in an open porch or entry of an honest woman, it would prove that the honest woman were the mother, because the bastard lay in her entry or house, unless the law so adjudged it, in regard the door or entry was open; So unless you will say, that the heart sins by being no better shut, then to let such a thought be thrust in, questionlesse the very thought as a formall sinfull thought or motion, is not the souls, but Sathans: But however, if it be thy sin, for which thou hast cause to be humbled; *Yet it is far from this sin, this must be a constant owner and possessor of thy house*, and a sin of a far higher nature, then ten thousand such thoughts are.

The contrary is determined by most of our Divines.

Fourthly, Thou sayest, *O but I have sinned many times against knowledge, against the light of my conscience.*

Con-

Consider therefore, *That though this sin be a sin against knowledge, yet every sin against knowledge, is not this sin:* Without question *Jacob* sinned against knowledge, in saying he was his fathers son, *His very son* Esau; and *David* in committing murther, and adultery; and *Peter* in denying his Master. All these were sins against knowledge, and yet none of them sins against the Holy-ghost. It must be a sin against the knowledge:

1. Of a divine Truth.
2. Of some fundamentall truth of the Gospel.
3. Distinctly made known to thee. This is plain from the sixth of the *Heb.* 4, 5, 6. & 10, 26. And from the Pharisees commission of this sin, *Mat.* 12. 31. They were convinced of it as a truth, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and did those miracles he did by the power of the Divine Nature; yet sinned in their saying before the people, *This man casteth out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of Devils:* Sins of knowledge against the law directly, are far from this sin also, the sin of our first parents, it is a sin against the enlightening grace of the spirit of God, yea, though thou hast denied some truth, not fundamentall, &c. Indeed for all such sins as these are, thou hast very great cause to be humbled (Christian,) and to sit down and mourn bitterly, that these wickednesses may be forgiven, and doing so thou needst not despair of the pardon of them. But *alas*, (saith a poor Christian) *I have in a passion or sickness, when I knew it was the hand of God, blasphemed God, or I have at such a time for fear of threats of death, denied the work of God, and the truth of God, &c.*

Fifthly, Therefore consider, *That though the denial of thy knowledge, and the truth of God, be a great piece of this sin, yet it is not enough to constitute it, and besides it must be another manner of denyall, then that which thou complainest of.* It is not enough to constitute this sin, for there must be a blasphemy; Secondly, An opposition to it. 5. It must be a deliberate and advised denyall, not rash, and sudden.

Secondly, It is true, that deniall is an ingredient in this unpardonable ſin: But it muſt be,

1. *A wilfull deniall, free,* not ariſing from fear. *Peter* ſo denied his Maſter, and many of the Martyrs denied, yea, and abjured the Faith; But either, Firſt, *Sathan by his temptations, Secondly, Or the weakneſs of their fleſh,* occaſioned it, for they at the ſame time loved Chriſt, and the truth of Chriſt.

2. *It muſt be a deniall, on purpoſe to diſcredit the truth, out of a venome and malice of heart to it.* I may deny a fundamentall truth, in an argument and diſputation, to ſee how another can prove it; yet I have not ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt I hope.

3. *It muſt be a conſtant deniall.* If they ſhall *fall away,* παραπίπτοντας [it ſignifies, falls all in ſhatters] ſo as an old rotten houſe not well at firſt put together. Comfort thy ſelf therefore Chriſtian, thou haſt not ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, though thou haſt poſſibly inadviſedly ſpake with thy lips, yea, though through the violence of Sathans temptations and wickedneſs, or weakneſs of thy heart, (for fear) thou haſt denied thy Saviour and his truth; onely go out and *weep bitterly,* renew thy love, regain thy favour, confeſſe him before men; Thus many of the Martyrs did, rending their recantations, or abjurations, and ſuffering Martyrdom gloriouſly. But yet will ſome poor Chriſtian ſay, *Alas! yet I fear I have ſinned this ſin, I have hated ſuch a godly man, envied that goodneſs which I ſaw in him, I could hardly endure ſuch a man, whom I am confident is the Saint of God, &c.* Conſider therefore in the ſixth place,

Sixthly, *That the hatred and envy of every godly man, nor every envy of his goodneſs, or every oppoſition againſt him for it, doth not make thee guilty of this unpardonable ſin.* It is poſſible thou mayeſt hate a man that is a godly man, for ſome civill injury he hath done thee, or thy friend, poſſibly thou mayeſt do it ignorantly, verily thinking

* Convicium facit ac peccat in SS. qui ipſam Spiritus Sancti illuminationē & operationem negat eſſe illuminationem & operationem ſpiritus, ſed contendit & impudenter aſſerit impoſſibile eſſe captioſam, ſeductionē ſatanicā, & virtutem magicam. Bullinger. in Matth. 12. 31. Eſt Convitiū illud quo dixerant Chriſtū habere Spiritū immundū, hoc eſt, quo Spiritū Sanctū per quem vel in quo Chriſtus ejiciebat dæmona dicebāt eſſe Spiritum Satanæ. Muſc. in loc. Proinde deſtinata perſeverans & malitioſa rebellio ſive contradictio contra manifeſtā veritatē eſt peccatū in Sp. ſanctū & cū deſinit rebellare Deo, ac hujus verba & opera non vocat in dubium & non amplius peccat in S. Sanctum. Bullinger. ibid. v. Quakher in loc.

thinking he is nought; possibly thy envy of him, may be an emulation, not being sorry that the truth lives in him, but angry to see the graces of Gods spirit live in him, and not thee; these now are far from unpardonable sins, nor is every opposition of the truth of Jesus Christ, or the professors of the truth, an opposition sufficient to constitute this sin, it may be a persecution out of ignorance as *Pauls* was, and God pardoned it, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

It must be first *an hatred of, and opposition against, the truth and godlinesse of such men.* Not when thou malicest godliness, because it is in him that hath done thee a personall injury, but when thou malicest and hatest a man, because he is holy, and loves the truth of God, and lives before God strictly.

Secondly, *It must be with a secret desire to extinguish and spoil the credit of God, and his truth.* When a wretch is mad to see Gods name exalted, and to see the truth of God prosper, and would fain spoil all its market. 2.

Thirdly, *And it must be an opposition to the truth, that to the wretch is known, and he is convinced,* that is a truth of Jesus Christ, yet he hateth a person, because, he entertains it and walks accordingly, and seeketh how to cut off him, and the truth; such manner of malice was the Pharisees malice, *Mat.* 12. 31. Yet, *alas!* (saith a poor Christian) *Since I have received the Holy Ghost, and tasted his gifts. I have sinned thousands of sins, renewing them every day, &c.* What hath been already said, That this sin must be an opposition a knowing, wilfull, open, malicious opposition to the truth of Christ, were enough to answer this. But consider, 3.

Seventhly, *It must be a totall falling away from the truth, Religion and profession of Jesus Christ,* Heb. 4. 6. Many are the Saints failings, this must be a totall falling from all grace and holinesse; When a man clear leaves all manner of profession of holiness, and falls into all manner of wickednesse; Now darest thou accuse thy 7.

heart of this Christian? or doest thou sometimes slip, but presently renew thy covenant made with God, by a seasonable repentance, praying, crying, bettering thy life and conversation, &c. Never fear this sin, it hath many drams of the weight of hell in it more then thou complainest of.

8. Eighthly, *It is not probable* (saith Master *Rutherford*) *That thou shouldst be guilty of that sin against the Holy ghost, and none but thy self complain of it.* It ordinarily breaketh out into prodigious acts of wickedness, it is no chamber closet sin, though it be hatcht in thy heart, yet it goes into the mouth, and defiles that, the sinner with that reviles, and raves, and blasphemes Christ; and commonly it shews it self further, the sinner (with *Julian*) persecuteth the Saints, whom his heart knows are Saints, with fire and sword; didst thou ever do any of these things? (Christian) mistake not thy self, be humbled for thy sins and failings, but transgress not by despairing without a cause. Consider further,

9. Ninthly, *If thy sin that thou complainest of so to be the unpardonable sin as thou unwarrantably thinkest, be a trouble and a grief of heart to thee, thou maist be sure, that it is not that sin that thou takest it for*, Heb. 4. 6. *It is impossible* (saith the Apostle) *that they that commit it, should be renewed again by repentance.* The meaning of which place, is not that if they do repent, yet it is impossible that they should be pardoned, that were to put a lye upon the promises of the Gospel; But it is impossible, that ever they should repent to be renewed: This makes Saint *Austine* determine *finall impenitency* to be the unpardonable sin; when the wretch abusing the mercy of God that should lead him to repentance, according to the hardnesse of his heart, refuseth repentance, and treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath. Now though I do not think (with S. *Austine*) that this is the whole formality of that sin, nor yet (with *Aquinas* and the

Aug. T. 10. Ep. de Verbis Domini. 11. p. 45.

the Papists) that it can be properly called a species of that sin, yet I think with almost all sober Divines, that it is an undoubted consequent of that sin; God after the commission of that sin, by any poor wretch giving him over to a blindness of minde, and a finall hardness of heart, that he cannot repent: But like *Esau, If he seeks repentance carefully with tears, yet he findes it not.* Now if thy sin be a trouble, and grief of heart to thee, thou mayst be assured it is not that sin, for the undoubted consequent of that is an hardnesse of heart, and a reprobacy of minde.

Tenthly Consider, *The sin against the Holy-ghost, neither in respect of it self and its own greatnesse, nor yet in respect of the power of Gods mercy, is unpardonable.* Be it never so great, it is not infinite, as the mercies of thy God are; It is indeed a scarlet sin, but scarlet sins to the returning penitent may be pardoned, *Isai.* 1. 16. It is unpardonable (say some) in respect of Gods will, God can, but he neither ever did, nor will pardon it, for it is a sin of malice directly against pardoning mercy: Gods mercy would be stained in the pardoning of it. Secondly, It is unpardonable (say others, and those the most) *In regard that it is impossible that the sinner should repent and beleeve,* without which, there is no hope of pardoning mercy, from any Gospel-promise: And this is questionlesse true, for God hath said, *Perditio tua ex te, Thy damnation O Israel is of thy self,* not of me. Though a poor wretch be damned for this sin, yet he may (proximately) thank the hardness and impenitency, and unbeleef of his own heart, not Gods will. But yet further consider,

10. *Brentius* thinks, by forgiven is ment excused; and so thinks all sin that is inexcusable, is sin against the Holy-Ghost. v. *Brent. in Mat.* 12.31. ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσῃ ὃ σογγνωσθήσεται. Theoph. ad loc *Quomodo peccator si remissionem tales assequantur, quam non quærunt neq; desidera ut.* Gualther in Matth. 12.31.

Eleventhly, *That this can be no sufficient excuse for thee, for not beleeving, because though it doth take away from thee the power of beleeving, yet it doth not excuse thee from the duty of beleeving.* Beleeving is a Gospel-duty, it is a law enjoined to all, every one is called to it,

11.

John 3. 16. *Mat.* 11. 29 *Isai.* 55. 1, 2, 3. Yea salvation is proffered to all those that do beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ; doth the Gospel any where say, *Come you that have not sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, come and beleeve and you shall not perish?* No surely, it calls to all, be you what you will, let your sins be what they can, how many, how great soever they can, come, beleeve, and you shall not perish. It is unwarrantable then to disobey a Gospel-precept, upon a beleeving the temptations of thine enemy the Devil, or the groundlesse suggestions of thine own spirit.

12. Lastly, Consider, *If thou hadst sinned that unpardonable sin, thou couldst not by any infallible demonstration conclude thy self guilty of it, before thy dying day and hour.* How wilt thou demonstrate it, from thy hardnesse of heart, and going on in unbeleef? thou must do it so or no way; for though thou beest a malitious persecutor and hater of God, and goodnesse, yet according to the tenour of the Gospel-promises, if thou repentest and beleevest, thou art forgiven; now if this hardnesse of heart, joyned with thy malice and unbeleef, be not finall, it is no infallible effect of this sin; how wilt thou know it is finall before thou diest? canst thou not yet repent and beleeve? strive then Christian, God may give thee power and call thee in at the eleventh hour, just at thy dying hour (as the theef upon the cross) which if he does, thou hast unjustly and cruelly condemned thy self, and belyed thy own soul. To sum up therefore all in a word, You hear Christians, beleeving yet remains your great duty; It stands firm, *beleeve, and you shall be saved.* You have seen one block more thrown out of your way. I have shewed you this temptation or suggestion cannot hinder, where by the way you have accidentally heard something of the nature of this unpardonable sin, which being well understood by Christians, will be enough to satisfie Christians against this doubt. And from all that hath been said

v. *Aug. T.* 16. *E.* 11. *de Verbis Domini, p.* 46. *copiosè.*

said concerning this, You may gather this description of the sin against the Holy Ghost; which is consonant to the sense of most sober and Orthodox Divines concerning it, and conteins the marrow of what most of our Divines have said concerning it. Take it thus,

A Description of the sin against the holy Ghost.

It is for a man that hath been first enlightened by the Holy Ghost.

2. With Fundamentall Gospel-truths.

3. Dinstinctly. ——— Against, 1. Knowledge, And 2. Deliberation, 3. Directly, 4. Freely and wilfully, 5. Openly, 6. Maliciously, 7. Desperately. ——— Without any provocation, but the corrupt wickedness of his own heart, (drawn out occasionally upon the making known of some Divine Evangelicall fundamental truths, or propagating of them, he himself being convinced, that they are the truths of God) In his heart to envy the credit of the truth amongst others, and out of his malice to God, whose the truth is, and to the truth, because it is true; to blaspheme, and revile the truth of God, and oppose it in others malitiously, and to blaspheme those gifts of the Holy Ghost, and that truth which he had formerly been convinced of, and received, and to set himself in such malicious opposition against it, as to desire and do what in him lies, to spoil the credit, and extinguish the light of the truth, and destroy the friends of it, because they are so, and in this wickedness to go on, making a generall defection from God, and the wayes of God, and maliciously persisting in such opposition without any repentance, and finally perishing in it; despairing of Gods mercy, if at any time he should have any kinde of remorse.

1. *A subjecto.* From the degree. *A causa procreante.*

From the acts of it.

From the object of it.

From the end of it.

From the consequents of it.

This I conceive is a full description of it, which if such Christians as ordinarily complain of this burthen, would learn, they would quickly finde their complaint groundless. If any yet remain unsatisfied in, I shall refer them to a little (but full) Book concerning this subject, called, *A Discourse of the sin against the Holy Ghost, composed*

composed by Master Bradshaw, in which they shall finde as much as can be said upon this subject. Here I shall break off.

And now I have done with answering the Scruples of those that think they ought not, and pretend they dare not, beleeve. Either,

1. Conceiting they are not enough humbled. Or,
2. Because they do not know they are elected. Or,
3. Because they conceive themselves unworthy. Or,
4. Upon a conceit they have sinned the unpardonable sin against the Holy ghost.

SERM.

SERM. VI.

ROM. 10. 9.

And shalt believe with thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

HAving in my foregoing Sermons, spake something toward the satisfaction of those that *dare not beleeve*, or at least think they dare not. I come to speak to those that think they do not beleeve. The complaint of the first was founded in their mistake, of their own condition; or of the grounds of faith. The mistake of these, is founded in a mistake of the various acts, and true nature of faith; hence now saith many a poor soule.

Alas Sir! *do you take me for a beleever, you do not know what an heart I have, how full of ignorance, how full of doubting, how full of distrust, &c.*

Cap. 6.

How to satisfie such Christians as have true faith in their souls: but are conceited their faith is not true.

NOw for satisfaction to such Christians, let us search out the cause of such complaints; I conceive there may be a double cause.

1. *A mistake in the nature and acts of Faith.*
2. *A misjudging of the effects of Faith.*

First, The complaints of such a soul, which yet all this time truly beleeves, may arise from a mistake concerning the nature and acts of Faith; and therefore the way to satisfie it will be rightly to inform it concerning them, and to this end, I shall but propound to such a soul to consider these two things.

1. *That there are many acts, and more degrees then one, of true saving Faith.*
2. *That true faith is of so good a nature, that it will and may dwell with many doubtings, and weaknesses, in a poor soul.*

These two things cleared, I trust many souls will be satisfied; for commonly the mistake is grounded upon ignorance, conceiving there is no Faith, but Faith of assurance, and that Faith comes to be no Faith, if but a dram of doubting be mingled with it, &c.

Consider therefore I say, *First, That true Faith hath severall acts, and severall degrees.* A fulness of perswasion is not the least act, or degree of Faith, no not of true justifying Faith. There are notes under that Ela. There is great quarelling concerning the nature and essence of true justifying Faith; some will have it to be a bare know-

knowledge. Thus (saith the Apostle) *The devils believe, and tremble*: Some will afford us a little more, and tell us that Faith consists in an assent, but beyond this they will not stride; some in too full opposition to these, denying any certainty of perswasion and assurance to be, have described Faith by an assurance and full perswasion, which is the highest, and not the direct, but the reflex act of Faith, when indeed the very essence of justifying Faith lieth betwixt these, in an act of receiving of Christian adherence to, and reliance upon Jesus Christ.

To Faith we grant a knowledge is required of Gods word. But this we say is rather supposed to Faith, then an act of true justifying Faith.

First, The lowest act of Faith is *an Assent*, a yielding in thy soul to the word of God, an agreement to the truth of it, *Exod.* 14.31. *Israel beleeved the Lord, and his servant* Moses [*viz.*] gave credence and assent, agreed that it was just, and good, and true, that the Lord spake, and relied upon the authority of him that spake it; So by this act of Faith, doth the beleever, when he hears the word of God revealed concerning his salvation, he closeth with it; as suppose that, *John* 3.16. *God so loved the world that he gave his onely begotten Son, that whosoever beleeves in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Or that of the Apostle, *There is no other name under heaven*, whereby a man may be saved, *but the name of Jesus*; or that again, *This a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.* Faith now doth not only know this, but closeth with God in these truths: And so concerning the promises of salvation, when God saies, *Though your sins were as scarlet, I will make them as snow, though they were as crimson, yet they shall bee white as wool.* Faiths work now is to perswade the soul to an assent to, and credence of the truth of this good word of God, yea, and it is not every assent that is an act of Faith neither.

1. First, It must bee a *stedfast Assent*, The believer doth as verily beleeve the promise of God, as that hee doth live; he saies in his heart, and with his whole heart: First, *The word that tels me, this is the word of an everliving and unchangeable God*, and it is undoubtedly his Word. Secondly, *It is the word of a true and faithfull God*; The Apostle cals Gods Word, *The word of truth*; And it is the word of truth either *materially*, the matter of it is truth, or *objectively*, the object of it is truth. It hath the God of truth for the Author, It is whole truth for the matter. And this the beleever gives full and stedfast credit unto.

2. Secondly, *Yea, and hee gives credit to every truth that the word of God holds out to him as truth.* Faith quickens the soule, to thirst after full discoveries of truth, and quickens the soule to receive every beame of the light of truth, that shines into it. The *Hebrews* say, *That there is not the least tittle of the Law, upon which great mountaines do not depend.* The beleever saith, there's not the least jot in the word of God, upon which great mountaines of truth do not depend, not any leafe but the God of truth is wrapt up in. I remember that it was Gods command in the 28. *chap.* of *Deut.* That when the severall curses were read, all the people should say *Amen*; and that not to this or that curse, but at the denuntiation of every curse all the people said *Amen*; I do not read the like command when the blessings were pronounced, yet (without question) their assent was required to them as well as the other. But our hearts are ready enough to say *Amen* to blessings, and promises, but wee would not say *Amen* to threatnings and curses: Now the beleever gives assent and credence to the word of God, even there where it seemeth most to strike at his owne intereſt, and happiness; he beleeves *all things that are written in the law, and the Prophets*, Act. 24. 14.

V. *Balls Treat. of Faith*, 1. p.

Yea,

Yea, and he gives thirdly, a *clear assent unto the word of God, and every portion of it.* He is not like him that saith *Amen* to any thing, he will give his assent to every piece of the word of God, and yet not a blind assent to any piece of it; but every truth that hee assents unto, shines into his soule with a light as cleare as the suns at high noon-day. As Christ told the woman of *Samaria*, John 4.22. *You worship you know not what, but we know what we worship.* The discourse had been very high about very great mysteries; Christ had told her of a strange gift hee would give her, *Living water*, *v.*10. That should have a strange quality, even a quality to quench *thirst for ever*, *v.*14. She gave some assent to this, the water pleased her taste, but it was but a blind assent, for she dreamed of such a water as might satisfie her bodily thirst, that she might no more come thither to draw. And *v.*20. When she made a confession of her Faith to Jesus Christ, that it was just of the same length and bredth of her fathers, not an inch longer nor shorter (a Faith of the same last with most now adaies.) Christ told her that in the daies to come, there should be a strange kinde of worshipping the Father, *Neither at Jerusalem, nor yet in that mountaine. Yee worship, saith he, you know not what, but wee know what wee worship.* Many assent this day to the word of God, They assent to it that there is a Christ come into the world to save sinners, &c. None will deny this, but it is in their braines but as a darke notion, or else they have received it as a tradition of their fathers. (Our forefathers religion is a great plea in these daies) The *Samaritans* they worshipped, they gave a kind of a blind credence, and assent to some things that were truths in the word; But alas! they worshipped they knew not what, they had no cleer distinct knowledge of those truths that they made an orall profession of, and with their mouths did pretend assent to. So wicked and profane men now a- 3.

daies give a kinde of an assent to the word of God, and to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, but it is far from the meanest, and lowest act of true Faith. When they hear or have received it from tradition, that Christ was born of a Virgin, or that Christ though eternall God yet was also perfect man, that hee died for sinners, &c. the wretches will tell you they beleeve these things; But alas! they assent not to them as clear distinct truths, made out evidently and convincingly to their soules, they say they professe they worship they know not what. They understand not these things, *The naturall man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him, nor can he know them for they are spiritually discerned.* He gives his blind assent, and perhaps will set his hand to them, but he doth but set his hand to a blanke if he does; nor can it bee otherwise, for the carnal man hath nothing but the bucket of carnall reason to draw with, out of the unfadomable depth of the mysteries of salvation; and while hee hath nothing else, thus reason disputes, and cannot but dispute in his soule; If Christ be God, How could he be borne or dye? reason cannot answer these questions, therefore they seem dark to the poor blind wretch, and though he professes hee gives credence to the word of God, in these particulars; Yet his assent is but a darke and forced act of his will, not a voluntary and clear act of it, closing with the truth, and embracing of it; nor can it be, because (as I have shewed) his assent of his will cannot proceed from a well enlightned understanding, without the precedency of which the will is but ravished into an assent. The understanding is that which holds the candle to the will in the soule: Now the assent and credence which every true beleever gives to the word of truth, though it bee an act of the will (for it is the wils act to delight in, and close with and scale) yet it proceeds from a spiritually, and clearly enlightned

1 Cor. 2. 14.

lightned understanding, for it is the understandings office to dictate to the will: Now assent in the wicked man, is but an act of his will without any clearnesse in the understanding, the understanding onely presenting the truth, as a notion, or tradition, or commonly received opinion, this is far from an act of Faith, but such as the devils have. It is like the *Athenian* devotion, *Paul* coming to *Athens*, *Act.* 17. 23. found an Altar with this superscription, Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ, *To the unknown God.* Their worshipping argued some assent of the will, and the will alwaies following the dictate of the understanding. It is certaine that there was some knowledge; the truth was this, Their understanding had gathered up some generall notions of the Deity [*That there was a God, &c.*] and these might bee seen by the light of nature, or heard from their forefathers, and suckt in by tradition. And it is plaine it was no more, for they ingenuously confesse, that the God whom they worshipped, was unknown to them; they knew that there was a God, and possibly, that this God was a spirit, and that this God must be worshipped. Naturall eyes discern all this; but it was not a cleare and distinct knowledge, and assent, they worshipped they knew not what, their Altar was to the unknown God. As many name-Christians, beleevers at large, now a daies mutter over their Common-prayers to their unknown God, and come to Church to worship an unknown God, onely their fathers and mothers have told them, there is a God and a Christ, and this Christ came into the world to save sinners, and they must bee good Church-men and serve God, &c. But now where this is an assent in the soule (to a truth) as an act of true faith, it is out of a distinct and clear understanding. It conceives a great deal of reason, why it should beleeve such a truth, close with such a promise, assent to such a word, and the soule so clearely and brightly

sees

sees the truths, that it sets its hand and heart unto, that it wonders at the blindness of carnall men, that they should not see it as clear as they doe, but yet be blind to the things of God; when for their parts they are as clear to their soules as the Sunne when it shineth at bright noon-day. And therefore Faith is called, *Heb.* 11. 1. *The evidence of things not seen.* The word translated, evidence, is Ἔλεγχος, which signifies, a convincing demonstration, it commeth of the greek verbe Ἐλέγχω, which signifies (*say criticks*) so to convince, and bring evidence and reason for a thing, and prove it by demonstration so clearly, that no man can either deny it or object against it, or so much as pretend an objection against it. Such is Faith to the gracious soule, it perswadeth the soule so to assent, that the soule is clearly convinced of the thing to be assented to: Faith hath so fully perswaded the soule of the word, truth, promise, that it desires its hand and heart, to that the soule is fully satisfied in it, and is clear in it. Though the beleeving soule neither doth see, nor expects to see the brightnesse of sublime mysteries, by the eye of carnall reason; yet it sees by another eye, and so clearely every thing that it assents to, that it conceives there can be no darknesse in it, no reason and objection pretended against it, but frivolous and vain, and of no value. This is Faiths first act, stedfast, clear assent. Now in this the soul may possibly deceive it selfe.

Leigh, Critica.

The second act of Faith, is the soules *receiving* the Lord Jesus Christ. I know Divines usually make but three acts of Faith, the one common, and not distinctive, of which you have heard; *viz.* the act of assent: the second *special, necessary and distinctive*; and that is the soules act of adherence or reliance, of which hereafter; this is call'd the direct and justifying act of Faith: the third not necessary to the life of grace, which they call the consequent and reflex act of Faith, and

and that is Assurance, or perswasion, (of which also hereafter) but I conceive the justifying act of faith, lies something below that act which in a proper way of speaking may be called an act of Reliance, and that Reliance is an higher degree of faith, that which leads me to this, is,

1. The opinion of some Reverend Divines whom I have discourst with. 1.

2. Besides that in my little experience, I have found it an easier matter to convince doubting Christians, that they have received the Lord Jesus Christ, then to perswade them that they rely upon the Lord Jesus Christ. 2.

3. The Denomination of the Acts of faith should (I conceive) be rather, from that which most expresseth the Nature of them, then from every ingredient into them; so that although it be true, that there is no poor soul that hath truly received the Lord Jesus Christ, but he, or she doth truly rely upon him; yet Receiving, and relying are two things, and the *opening of the will*, to close with the Lord Jesus Christ is more fully expresst, by the term of Receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, then by the terme of *Reliance upon him*, which at least foundeth as subsequent to the other. But chiefly. 3.

4. The credit of that text of Scripture, 1 John 12. leads me to it. *To as many as received him* (saith S. *John*) he gave power to be called the Sons of God, even to them that beleeve in his name; where observe the Evangelist expounding *Receiving the Lord Jesus Christ* by *beleeving in his name*; from whence this plainly results: *That it is an act of true saving faith for the soul, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ*; for 1. the text expounds it so, making the latter terme *Beleeve in his name*, exegeticall to the first terme *Received*. 2. Annexing adoption, which is the priviledge of saving faith to *Receiving*, to as many as Received him, saith the text, he gave power to be called the sons of God. 4.

Having given you my grounds, of making this a distinct act of faith, I proceed to open to you the Nature of it.

1. We will enquire into the signification of the Originall word translated [Receive].

2. We will enquire into the Nature of the thing.

1. 1. For the grammaticall signification of the word here used, in the Originall ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτὸν, the Originall word is λαμβάνω, and in the verse before παρέλαβον [ὁ παρέλαβόν] *Chemnitius* notes, that the Evangelist to expresse this *receiving* useth three words in this *Chap.* 1. λαμβάνειν which signifieth to take or receive. 2. παραλαμβάνειν which (saith he) signifies to take ones self what is offered. 3. καταλαμβάνειν which signifies to obtain and comprehend: (so he criticizeth) But to leave the signification of the word, and to come to the thing; All must know that it is a metaphoricall expression. Receiving, is an action of the hand by which we take any thing, that is laid before us, or offered unto us, it is indeed sometimes (but Metaphorically) applied to the mind. To understand therefore what it is to *Receive the Lord Jesus Christ*, it will be necessary, that we understand the Nature of that action of the hand, and when we have found what the hand doth when it receives a thing, that is offered to it, or laid before it; we shall understand what the soul doth in receiving Jesus Christ. I conceive you may comprehend the Notion of either in these three things:

Chemnit. Har. o. 1. p. 14.

1. The hand opens.
2. It reacheth it self out.
3. It grasps, and takes hold of the thing tendred.

These 3. things (I conceive) will fully explain the nature of the Soules act in it's Receiving Jesus Christ.

1 1. The first thing in *receiving* then, *is the soule opening of it self.* As the hand opens it self to receive the object, so

so the gracious soul opens it self to receive Jesus Christ. A shut hand cannot receive any thing; no, the first thing, the hand must do in order to it's receiving any thing, must be to open it self. There is no soul but is naturally shut against the Lord Jesus Christ, shut against grace, dead in trespasses and sins: now when the Lord infuseth grace into the soul, the first thing he doth is this, he openeth such a soul, *Acts* 16. 14. *The Lord opened the heart of Lydia*; till the *Everlasting gate* be opened, the *King of glory* cannot enter: in those words in the *Acts*, express Gods work of saving grace upon *Lydias* heart; now the first piece of it is expresst by the Lords opening the heart: διήνοιξεν, The Lord opened her heart.

1. By *Illumination*, thus her understanding was opened: but I do not think that is all, for besides that I am of M. *Shepards* mind, that this work was wrought before.

2. The word in the Originall signifies something more; *viz.* To unlock, to set wide open, as we would set open a door wide that one may come in at it. So the Lord opened the heart of *Lydia*, though it may be she had heard before of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there was a work of illumination wrought upon her understanding, and a work of conviction wrought upon her judgement, yet her *Will* was lockt and shut, till now the Lord comes, and breaks open the door of her will, and indeed this is properly the opening of the *Heart*: for the will hath the command of the heart. There is many a poor wretch, in whom the Lord hath wrought the two first works, yet they have not a dram of saving grace, the Lord hath made them in some measure to be enlightned, they see something of truth, yea and it may be there is a work of conviction wrought upon their spirits, they may be convinced that they are miserable enough, and that there is mercy enough in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is best to fly unto him; but yet their

stubborn wills are not subdued, their hearts are not yet opened, they cannot Receive Christ.

Secondly, the hand in the Receiving of a thing, doth not only open it self; but being opened, *it extends and stretcheth out it self to the object*, it reacheth out and applieth it self to that which it would have, or at least, *holds forth it self ready, to take a thing when it is offered*; the first (according to *Chemnitius* his note) is λαμβάνειν, the other is, προσλαμβάνειν; this is now another piece of the souls act in *Receiving the* Lord Iesus Christ, it holds forth it self ready, and doth reach out it self to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It doth reach out it self to take a Christ tendered, this I take to be the souls hungring and thirsting, and longing after Christ, of which you read, *Psal.* 84. 2. *Psal.* 63. 1. *Isai.* 55. v. 1. to which the blessing is pronounced, *Matth.* 5. 6. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be satisfied*: these unfained desires and longings, Divines usually say are the seeds of faith, or rather the first fruits of it, they are the motions of the Affections upon the opening of the will, and concomitant to the least degree of saving faith; they are as the putting out of the souls hand to Christ, the application of the soul to him.

3. But thirdly, the hand that receiveth any thing as it openeth, and reacheth out it self, and is ready so to receive, *so it doth clasp it self about and embrace the object*, so the soul that Receiveth, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Will, 1. *Openeth*, 2. reacheth out it self by the help of the affections, so it doth lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ and imbrace him; you shall find the phrase used *Heb.* 11. 13. *Not having received the promises, but having seen them a far off, and embraced them*, it is true the receiving there specified is put in a kind of opposition to embrace: but you must therefore consider, that the receiving there spoke of, is a receiving of fruition and enjoyment. They had not sensibly received the fulnes of the promise in the fruition of

3.

Ἀσπασάμενοι.

of it. *The seed of the woman that should bruise the serpents head*, was not to them visible, *viz.* to their bodily eies, yet they were saved by Faith, though not of sight; for they were Ἀσπαζόμενοι, such as had embraced the promises; It is an act of true Faith to embrace the promise. The word signifieth to salute with such a salutation as one friend salutes another; friends when they meet, you know salute each other, and embrace one another. It is *Beza's* note, that the word doth not only signifie to salute with a kisse, as it is often translated, but with embracing, as the fashion was in those Countries, and so is now, when dear friends meet, especially after a long absence, they kisse and embrace each other. The businesse of embraceing the promise consists in the soules closing with it: when a man doth embrace a friend, he opens his armes wide, and reaching them out he claspes them about his friend, and hugs him to him; so the soule when it receiveth Christ, it first *opens it selfe*, is made willing, and then it reacheth out it selfe *with an insatiable hunger, and desire after Christ*, and then closeth with it, hugs and kisseth the promise and Jesus Christ in it. You know in kissing there is a meeting, and joyning of the friends lips; so the soule meets Christ in embracing the promise. Christs lips and the soules lips meet, it reacheth out it selfe, and joyneth its wants and condition to the promise, and to Christ as having sutable fulnesse to supply its wants: In these three things I conceive consists the businesse of the soules receiving the Lord Jesus Christ; and this I conceive is (*Minimum quod sic* as they say) the least degree of true saving Faith: So that this Act of the soules receiving the Lord Jesus Christ may be thus described.

It is the Action of a gracious soule, whereby it opens it selfe, and being moved by an earnest desire and hunger, and longing after the Lord Jesus Christ in the promise, so reaching out it selfe, it friendly closeth with, and

Est amanter salutare, amplexari & osculari. Pareus ad loc. v. Bezæ, annot. in Mat. 5. 47.

embraceth, and kisseth the Lord Jesus Christ, and layeth hold on the gospel promise for its salvation. There is a meeting of two kindes lips and Christ; the soule and the promise greet like friends, and there is in the soule a willing application of it selfe to Christ, and the promise holding him forth as its suitable friends to help it in this suit. And this truly I conceive to bee the lowest act of true faith in any soule, after this it goes on to rely, and at last to be perswaded and assured.

I will only here put in a word for caution, to prevent mistakes: I have used in this discourse those phrases, *The soule openeth it selfe*, and *Reacheth out its selfe, &c.* I would be loth to be mistaken, as if I in any thing favour'd the Doctrine of the Pelagians, or any of those that are the Patrons of free will, as if I thought in the power of the soule, *virtute sua*, by its own strength to do this or that; either to open it selfe or reach out its selfe, or imbrace Christ, or doe the least in imbracing Christ; he that would allow God ninty nine parts, might have allowed him the hundredth part too in the worke of Faith, unlesse he could have minced lesse then a good thought, for to that saith the Apostle wee have no sufficiency; *The Lord opened Lydia's heart*, she had not so much as her little finger upon the key, but you must now remember that we are not speaking of faith as it is an infused habit, the creature of God in the soule, but we are speaking of faith considered in the act, as it is a branch growing out of that root of infused grace, and this is cerroine (saith *Augustine*) that wee will when we are made willing, and act when we are acted. God gives power to the soule to open it selfe, and to reach out its selfe after the Lord Jesus Christ, by inflamable desires, and hungrings and pantings after the Lord Jesus Christ, and then it doth open it selfe, and hunger and thirst, and reach out after, and imbrace the promised Saviour, exhibited in the gospel-promises.

Having

Having now opened largely to you what it is for the soul to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall shortly prove to you that this is an act of lively justifying Faith.

I find the Scripture very frequently expressing true Faith by this word *Receiving*, which (questionlesse) argues something more then assenting, and founds something lesse then stedfast relying (though there bee some graines of reliance mixt with it. I shall give you a few places, *Mat.* 11. 14. *And if you will receive it, this is Elias which was to come.* Doubtlesse our Saviours meaning is, *if you will believe it.* *Pro.* 4 10. *Hear O my son, and receive my saying*, that is, *Believe my saying.* Ezek. 3. 10. *All my words receive in thine heart.* Pro. 8. 10. *Receive my instruction and not silver.* James 1. 10. *Receive the ingrafted word with meekenesse.* Joh. 5. 43. *I am come in my Fathers name, and you receive me not.* Col. 2 6. *As you have therefore received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk in him.* These and many other Scriptures might bee produced, in which the Holy Ghost speaks believing in this phrase, but I shall spare them, that Text, 1 *John* 12. being like the sword of *Goliath*, *None to it* in which as I noted before,

1. The Evangelist expounds his first phrase, *Receiving him*, by a second, *Believing in his name.* To believe in his name, is to believe in his *wisdome, righteousnesse, sanctification, and redemption*, (saith *Brentius*) Mr *Calvin* saith, *he doth shortly note the manner of receiving Christ, to wit, when we believe in him. Qui non credunt, Christum non recipiunt, & Marloratus in loc.* By which you see, that receiving Christ is an act of true saving Faith; and, besides, 2. The *same priviledge is annexed to receiving which is proper to believing, viz.* Adoption; *he gave them power to be called the sonnes of God*; and, *if sons*, saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 17. *then heires, and joynt heires with the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I.

Mat. 11. 14.

Pro. 4. 10.

Ezeck. 3. 10. Pro. 8. 10. Iam. 1. 10. Ioh. 5. 43.

1 Ioh. 12.

1.

Vt Brentium ad loc. Christi recipiendi modum breviter notat, quum scilicet in eum creditur, Calv. ad loc.

Privi-

Priviledges I am sure) which belong only to true beleevers: I shall need adde no more I suppose, either to shew you that this receiving the Lord Jesus Christ is an act of true saving Faith, nor yet to open to you the Nature of it.

The third Act of Faith (which wee ordinarily say is the very marrow, and essence of justifying Faith) is *reliance, and dependency upon* Jesus Christ; when the soule having been perswaded of the word of truth, and assented to it, and having opened to him, and received him, doth hang, and depend upon it, as the word upon which it must live, and commits his soule to Christ, and hangs upon him as the Christ, by which he only can be saved. A learned Author hath noted six words in Scripture, by which the Holy-Ghost doth expresse to us, the nature and worke of beleeving, in this fiduciall Act.

Ball, *in his Treat. of Faith.*

1. Faith expresst by six words. הֶאֱמִינוּ

First, *Beleeving*, put in opposition to *fainting*, Psa. 27. 13. *I had fainted unless I had beleeved.*

2. חָסָה

Secondly, *Trusting*, put in opposition to *fearing*, Psal. 78. 22. *They trusted not in his salvation*, they were afraid of the Canaanites.

3. חוֹסִי

Thirdly, *Betaking to, as to a castle*, Psal. 2. 12. Our translation readeth, *Blessed are they that trust in him*: But *Mollerus* saith it signifies, *Protectionis causâ aliquò confugere, & se recipere (verbum appositum*, saith he) to fly to some place for protection, as to a castle in time of danger.

4. בָּטַח שָׁעַן

Fourthly, by a word that signifieth, *To lean and rely upon, as an old man that leaneth upon a staffe*, 2 Chr. 16. 7, 8. *Because thou didst rebye upon the Lord, he did deliver them into thy hand, verbatim* (say Expositors) because thou didst lean upon him as thy staffe.

5. נִסְמָךְ

Fifthly, By another word, *That signifies to stay up the minde, as with a prop*, Isa. 48. 2. *You stay your selves upon the Lord*, from fearing despairing, from sinking dejections, &c.

A

A saith word by which it is expresse, is resting and hanging upon, as a drowning man on a boy, Psal. 27. 5. So that we may say, That the very essentiall act in which consists the marrow of justifying faith, is this—— *When the soul being perswaded of the truth of Gods eternall word, gives a full and fixt assent, and credence to it; to every curse and threatning, as well as to every promise, and yet doth not faint, nor sinke in despair, nor drowne in sorrow, but in this apprehension of its lost and undone condition, opens and reacheth forth it selfe to the Lord Jesus Christ tendred in the Gospel, embraceth him, and runneth unto him as unto its most safe castle, and hangs upon him, committing the whole burthen of its soule unto him, and staies there, leaning upon him, and the promises of life, made in him to the soule.* This is now justifying Faith, which afterwards creates in the soule a quiet resting in God, a sweet delighting in God, a stedfast hope in him, and a patient waiting for him: and at last a confident assurance of him: But this is certainly Faith, so far as is upon pain of damnation, necessary to salvation: The going out of the soule unto Christ, and the whole application of it selfe to the promises of salvation made in him and by him; and whosoever doth this sincerely, and with a faithfull heart, is *passed from death to life, and shall never perish, neither in this life, nor in the life to come; it puts his trust in him that never fails them that do so.* 6. 713.

There is indeed a fourth Act of Faith, *Which is an act of assurance and full perswasion,* commonly called by Divines, *The vesture act of Faith.* Now this Act of Faith, *Is when the soule is fully and throughly perswaded, that Jesus Christ hath actually pardoned all its sinnes, and that it is his, and he is hers.* This is not that Act of Faith, concerning which the Apostle speakes, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by Faith, we have peace with God.* It is rather a consequent of justifying Faith, that peace which flow- 4.

flowerth to the soul, as a fruit, and a sweet effect of justification; and that this is not that Act of Faith which justifieth, is plain, *Because the soule must bee justified before it can put forth it selfe in this Act.* This is a comfortable but not a necessary Act of Faith, and is more properly called [*fides justificati*, then *fides justificans*] the Faith of a justified person, then justifying Faith: It is good and speciall justifying Faith, for the soul *heartily and sincerely to desire, and thirst and hunger after the pardon and forgivenes of its sins, through the free grace of Jesus Christ, and confidently to rest upon the promises of free remission and pardon.* But it is another pitch of Faith, and of an higher nature, *to bee confidently assured, that all my sins are really and fully pardoned.* It is one thing to beleeve, that my sinnes, how many and how great soever, shall bee taken away, and that God will smile upon me, and we shall not finally perish; And another thing to be fully assured, that now God is well pleased with us, and all our sins are blotted out; Yea it is one thing to be perswaded, that our names are in the white book of election, and our sinnes decretally pardoned, which was from eternity, and meritoriously pardoned, which was, if ever, in Christs death, And another thing to beleeve that God hath acquitted us actually from the obligation to death, that is in them; God so pardons in time, and in the Act of Justification. It is truth, wee ought to strive after a Faith of assurance, but wee are not necessarily obliged to an assurance upon our Justification; Faith precedes actuall, and formall justification in our consciences, it is the instrument to apprehend it. Now the Gospel doth not, when it cals to mee to beleeve, oblige me to a lye: If before I am justified, I should bee tyed to beleeve I am actually justified, the Gospell would oblige me to that in order to my justification, which I cannot upon warrantable grounds believe, till

till after my justification: So that wee cannot conclude, that wee have not true justifying Faith, that wee doe not believe, because wee cannot bee confident God hath actually and formally, in the court of our consciences, acquitted us from the guilt of our sins; for the essence of justifying Faith, doth not consist in that.

SERM.

SERM. VII.

1 COR. 13.9.

We beleeve in part.

YOu may remember that I have told you, that in order to the encreasing of our Faith, we must labour to remove those blocks which hinder the progresse of Faith in the soul.

1. Some, though possibly do beleeve, yet are afraid to beleeve, and startle at a resting upon the Lord Jesus Christ; either as you have heard mistaking the grounds of Faith, or else mistaking their own condition.

2. Others, *conceiving that they do not beleeve*, misjudging themselves. Either

1. From a mistake of the Nature and Acts of Faith; Or

2. From a misjudging the Effects of Faith.

Having set the soule so far on its way as to perswade it that it may go to the Lord Jesus Christ,

I came the last day, to rectifie the mistake of those that indeed have true Faith; but from a mistake concerning the nature of Faith and justifying Act, conceive they have no Faith, and so hinder their own growth.

To this end I told you I would first,

1. Shew you the severall acts of Faith, and shew you wherein true justifying faith consisted, this I did the last day.

2. Secondly, I promised to return and make it good to you, that such is the nature of true justifying Faith, that it will consist with many weaknesses in reference to its severall acts.

I am now come to shew what weaknesse in the severall Acts may be consistent with true saving faith. I find some Christians stumbled because of their weaknesse in knowledge, they are so ignorant they think it impossible they should have any of the sight of Faith in their darke soules. I shall therefore satisfie these first, that true Faith may consist with much ignorance.

CHAP. 7.

What weaknesses in respect of knowledge, may consist with true Faith in a gracious soule, and how to satisfie the soule in this trouble.

THough some dispute knowledge to bee an act of Faith, yet we say, that it is required to the lowest and meanest act of Faith (which is assent) rather then an Act of Faith it selfe; yet in regard many Christians that strive and labour after knowledge (having wanted those meanes that others have had, either in regard of hearing the Word, or in regard of educati-

on) have not attained to what they desire, walke yet troubled about their condition, in respect of their ignorance, and because of this are ready to deny the grace of God in the work of true Faith in their soules: Give me leave a little to speake something by way of satisfaction to such poor soules; you shall hear them complain in this manner.

Complaint. Alas! I beleeve? *I have not yet stept the first step of a Christian. I have not so much as a knowledge of Gods word, I am a poor ignorant soule, I know not halfe the mysterious doctrines of salvation; can such an ignorant wretch as I be a Beleever? Besides, for what I know I am ready to deny it; sometimes I thinke this is the word and truth of God, sometimes againe I think it is not; I fully beleeve nothing, I know nothing, I cannot read, nor understand when I hear; many things in Scripture I know not; and for what I know, I know nothing as I ought to know it.*

Here's the complaint.

Now to speak a word or two by way of comfort and stay to the soul, that labours under this trouble.

For thy knowing nothing as thou oughtest to know, (as thou complainest) it is happy for thy soule, (if thou speakest from thy heart,) that God hath wrought thy heart into so low an opinion of thy selfe. See what the Apostle speaketh, 1 *Cor.* 8.2. *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know it.* But now for thy reall ignorance that thou so much complainest of, I shall propound a few considerations, which will shew thee how much ignorance may consist with true faith in the soul, and then conclude all with a caution or two.

For the first,

1. First, consider, *Thou mayest bee ignorant in many points of Religion which are fundamentall in some sense, and yet have faith, true faith*; I think, when we speake of

of fundamentals, wee ought to distinguish; some fundamentals are absolutely necessary, our salvation stands upon them; as to beleeve, *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that he became man, a Jesus, a full Saviour, that he dyed for us that we might live; that there is no salvation in any other but in him, and that in him there is a fulnesse of salvation, &c.* These now are those pillars upon which our salvation stands, and the knowledge of which is alwaies supposed to true justifying Faith; none can bee ignorant in these, and beleeve; *For how shall they beleeve in him, of whom they have not heard?* (which was the Apostles question) but now there are other doctrines which are ordinarily called *fundamentals*, because they are such as Christians learn, even in the beginning of their conversion, such as are first taught, and laid for a foundation to build other truths upon; the doctrine of the imposition of hands, resurrection of the dead, &c. are reckoned up by the Apostle for fundamentals, *Heb.* 6.1,2. Now for these it is very possible that a Christian may bee ignorant of them, and yet have a true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; The Doctrine of the Trinity of the persons, *viz. That in the Deity there are three distinct manners of being, three distinct subsistences, distinguished each from other by their severall properties*; This is without question a fundamentall point of the second sort, such as is usually taught Christians as a piece of the foundation of Religion: yet I doe verily beleeve that a Christian may beleeve, and bee in the state of grace, and yet not be instructed fully, but bee ignorant in this. Suppose a Minister should go preach to Heathens, and preach what need men in naturall condition have of Jesus Christ, what a woefull condition they are in without him, what a readinesse there is in Christ to save them: and upon this presse faith; doe you think it is not possible, that some soule may be startled, and run out of it selfe, and rest

An non habiturus est consortium cum patre, & filio & Spiritu sancto, qui nesciat ad philosophiæ rationem expedire quid discernat patrem a filio, quid ab utroq; Spiritum sanctum, quid interfit inter filii nativitatem è patre & Spiritus processionē, si credo quod traditum est esse tres unius naturæ, quid opus est operosâ disputatione? Erasm. in ep. ad D.D. Io. Carondiletum, in editione sua. D. Hilarii Froven 1523.

rest truly upon Christ, and yet not bee for the present so well instructed, as to give you an account of the Trinity of persons? And yet without question it is a truth and a fundamentall truth too, *Acts* 19. *v.* 2. *Paul* came to *Ephesus*, and found certaine men that were Disciples, *v.* 1. He askes them if they had *received the Holy Ghost*; they ingenuously confest, that they were so far from receiving the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that they *had not so much as heard whether there was an holy Ghost or no*: I know most of Expositors construe it, of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; but for my part, I cannot subscribe to their opinion, but thinke the latter clause hath more then the former, and that there is an emphasis in their answer; and so *John* 20. *v.* 9. we find the Disciples of Christ ignorant in the point of Christs resurrection from the dead, and Christ chides his Disciples for their ignorance in this point, *Luke* 24. *v.* 5. The very Apostles were ignorant in the point of Christs Kingdom, and rule, and dreamt of Christs restoring the temporall kingdome to *Israel*, *Acts* 1. *v.* 6. This is the case of many a poore Christian; it may be it cannot read, or it hath not lived where there hath been any faithfull, powerfull, soule-enlightning preaching; but when Gods time comes, he brings the soule to hear, and it doth possibly hear of its poor, naturall, undone condition, and that there is none other name by which the Christian may be saved, but onely the Name of Jesus: yet this now being the work of Gods Spirit, the Spirit carries on its owne work, and creates Faith in the soule, brings the soule to trust and rely on Jesus Christ. There may bee divers fundamentall points that the soule all this while hath not heard a word concerning; as how many years sometimes doth a Minister preach, and not directly meddle with the Doctrine of the Trinity, &c. How many weeks, and not preach the Doctrine of the Resurrection? But here is now the condition of such a Christian,

The Disciples were ignorant concerning the Father, Ioh. 14. 8. *Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

Christian, after the Spirit of God hath enlightned him, and convinced him, &c. the poor soule (that regarded not instruction before) now begins perhaps to learne to read, pray; now hee heareth the word more, enquireth concerning God more, &c. and every day discovers more truth then other, to which the soule by nature was blinded; then begins Satans worke; the soule reflects upon it selfe, and begins to say, now, *Woe is me! I have my worke still to begin! I have made my selfe beleeve I have been a beleever so long; and alas! I have been a poore, blind, ignorant wretch, blind to the truths of Iesus Christ, &c. how could I beleeve while I knew so little?* Yes Christian thou mayest be a Scholler, though thou beest but in thy *Accidence*: there are some truths which are the *Credenda ad salutem*, the very foundation upon which salvation standeth: Now true Faith is not consistent without these: I cannot rest upon Christ, and Christ onely for salvation, and yet not know that there is a Christ, nor what this Christ is, how proportionate a Saviour for me; without question, the knowledge of the doctrine of Faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Saviour of man, what he is, what he hath done, what need we have of him; what a fulnesse there is in him; what a sufficiency of salvation for every soule that beleeveth, &c. is so much knowledge as is absolutely necessary, and without which no soule can be saved; yet this must not be understood without some caution, as I shall shew you anon; for though it be truth, such a blind soule may be enlightned so far, as truly to beleeve; yet if so, it will deny no truth, but labour and thirst after the knowledge of every truth: A man may be a Grecian, and yet not know every word in the Greek tongue, no not every Radix: Beleevers shall not be saved by their Book.

Secondly, *A Believer may be ignorant in many circumstantiall points of Religion, and yet be a true Believer*;

this is clear from many examples in Scripture. *Peter* himself did not know he might eat those birds and beasts, which to the Jews were unclean. The beleeving Romanes did not know their liberty in point of holy-dayes, and eating of meats first offered to Idols, which maketh the Apostle take a great deal of pains for setting Rules to strong Christians how to carry themselves in relation to their weak brethren, whose consciences were stumbled at their eating; both in the 14. Chap. of his Epistle to the *Romanes*, and also in his Epistle to the *Corinthians* he harps upon the same string again. The Churches of *Galatia* and *Colosse* were ignorant about the point of Christian liberty. The indulgent Master will not throw away the childs Exercise for want of a Comma: Christ rejects not the Christians Faith because it is not fringed with a knowledge in every circumstantiall in Religion: I call no truth circumstantiall (as by a slighting and neglective terme) for it is a beam of God; but as comparatively, though they bee truths to bee known, embraced, loved, practised, yet they touch not the vitals of salvation, as I may say: They are not necessary to bee knowne [*ad esse*] to make a true Beleever.

Act. 11.
Rom. 14.
Gal. 4.
Gal. 5.

3. Thirdly, *a Christian may be ignorant in the History of the Bible, and yet have true justifying Faith.* Every Scholler is not a Chronologer, nor an Historian, no more is every beleever; I may know what Christ was, though I know not what *Moses* and *Aaron* were; I may know which way Christ took, to bring my soule out of darknesse into marvellous light, though I doe not know which way *Moses* took to bring the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*; I may know there is but one King of Kings, though I doe not know how many Kings there were of *Israel* and *Judah*. The Disciples did not know all the Prophets had spoken, *Luk.* 24. 25.

4. Fourthly, *a Christian may be a true beleever, and yet not*

not know the meaning of many places in Scripture. God would never have appointed expounders of the Law, if every Christian, *qua* Christian, were to have been a generall Commentator. That Well is deep, and every one hath not a bucket to draw. There are that tell us, that the Spirit reveales the meaning of Scripture to the beleever, and would thence evince, that whoso hath the Spirit, must needs be fit to untie every knot, and unriddle every mystery of Scripture; but every one that hath the Spirit, hath not *the Spirit of Prophesie*: For those Scriptures which it is necessary in point of salvation, every beleever should know, every beleever understands the nature of them: God hath made the water shallow, that the Lambs may wade, but for those places through which the beleevers passages do not lie to Heaven, in which the Elephants may swim, God doth not require that every Lambe should sound those depths.

Fifthly, *A Christian may bee so farre ignorant in the fundamentals, as that he cannot make them out, and yet be a true beleever*; hee may be ignorant in the particulars, by which the generals are demonstrated; as for example, he may know that Christ dyed for him, and rest upon the merits of his death for eternall life, and so truly beleeve, and yet not be able to make this out, by reason of his ignorance, how Christ being God, should bee capable of death, how the humane and divine Nature were conjoyned; he may know that Christ satisfied by his active obedience for his actuall sin, and yet not perfectly understand how Christ being man should bee free from sin, being conceived by the Holy Ghost. The boyes Exercise may be true Latin, though hee cannot parse every word. The Disciples were beleevers, yet were ignorant concerning the Resurrection, yea, concerning Christs union with the Father, *John* 14. 4, 5, 6. The knowledge may be clear to them in the generall, though through 5. Luke 24.25.

through their infirmity and ignorance they bee not able to clear it up in the severall particulars.

6 Lastly, *They may bee so far ignorant in the substantials of Religion, as that they cannot dispute them*: The faculty of beleeving, and the art of disputing are two things: I may know and beleeve that which I cannot maintaine upon dispute: It is a known speech of that female Martyr, *I cannot dispute, but I can dye for Christ*; if shee had not beleeved, she would not have dyed; she could maintaine her faith with her blood, which shee could not maintaine with her tongue: As every Scholler, so every beleever is not a disputant: It is good Logick in divinity, for the Christian to hold the conclusion, though hee knowes not what to say to the Sophisters premisses: But lest now some should think and say, that I have laid Heaven a little too wide open; I must limit what I have said with two Cautions. To satisfie the poore doubting Christian in point of ignorance, I have laid downe the truth in these Conclusions, and shewed you how far it is possible that a man may be ignorant, and yet a true beleever; But,

1. First, *It must be provided hee bee not content with his ignorance*, but useth the meanes to encrease knowledge, searcheth the Scripture, and heares the Word; that this ignorance proceeds meerely out of infirmity, not of wilfulnesse; otherwise this knowledge will not be sufficient. It is given as the character of unbeleevers, 2 Pet. 3. 5. *That they were willingly ignorant*; We have an High-Priest *who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for as much as hee also was compassed about with infirmity*, but for the wilfully ignorant, the High-Priest was to offer no Sacrifice. Know therefore Christian, that thou canst have no comfort that thou beleevest though thou bee ignorant, unlesse (appealing to thine owne heart) thou canst say, I have done what I can to dispell these mists of

2 Pet. 3. 5.

Heb. 5. 2.

of ignorance, and learn the whole truth of God. Christ Jesus will take the blind man by the hand, if he beseecheth him to touch him, provided he be willing to receive his sight: And as he did not cast off the blind man that at first saw men walking like trees: So he will not cast off the Christian that at his first illumination sees divine truths like trees, not clearly, distinctly, and fully; but as he dealt with that blinde man, he left him not there, but he put his hands again upon him, and made him see every man clearly: So if thou belongest to Christ, he will put his hands againe upon thee, and make thee see every portion of his divine truth more clearly; hee will make thy dawning twilight be growing up to a mid-day of knowledge. Therefore S. *Peter* laies it as his necessary injunction upon Beleevers, *That they should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* That's the first Caution. Mar. 8.23,24,25. 2 Pet. 3.18.

Secondly, this ignorance may bee consistent with true Faith in thee, provided *thou dost not deny the truth that thou dost not know*; Thou mayest have Faith, though thou dost not know what the Trinity is, or how it is; but if thou denyest the Trinity, I make a question of thy truth of Faith, or possibility of salvation. Ignorance of some truths, is not damnable, but the denyall of every truth (when reveal'd) is damnable; want of a clear knowledge is not damnable; but denyall of the truth, becau'e thou canst not clearly make it out, is damnable. Speak not evill of what thou knowest not, but wait untill, and pray that God would reveale it unto thee. 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *Hee hath denyed the Faith, and is worse then an Infidell.* There was a great difference betwixt the Disciples that had not yet learnt, and the Sadduces that denyed the Resurrection; I never yet learnt or read, that any of the latter were beleevers; the Disciple had not yet knowne the Father, nor yet the Son well, *John* 14.7,8,9. But the Apostle saies, *Hee* 2. 1 Tim. 5. 8.

Joh. 14.7,8,9.

is Antichrist that denyeth the Father and the Son. Ignorance of truth will be born with, but denyall of truth shall not. Take heed of denying the truths thou dost not know. Thus I have shewed you how true Faith may consist with weakness concerning the point of knowledge, which though it be not properly called an Act of Faith, yet it is supposed in the lowest Act; and to satisfie you, I have shewed you what ignorance may be consistent with true Faith, and what not; and with what Cautions a Christian may be comforted concerning his faith, notwithstanding his ignorance in some truths, and some things not unnecessary to be known.

SERM.

SERM. VIII.

MAR. 9. 24.

Lord I beleeve, help thou my unbeleefe.

CHAP. 8.

Concerning thoſe weakneſſes which may conſiſt with true Faith, in reſpect to its act of Aſſent, and how to comfort a ſoule under ſuch troubles.

I Shall now go on to ſhew you what doubts a Chriſtian that truly beleeves, may have conſiſtent with his Aſſent, which I laid downe as the firſt act of Faith; for knowledge is rather ſuppoſed to Faith, then an act of it. You may remember I told you, Aſſent is an act of Faith whereby the Beleever doth firmly, fully, and clearly agree to the truth of God revealed in his Word. Now (ſaies the doubting Chriſtian) *Alas! I have no Faith, I ſcarce aſſent to the Word*

of

of God at all, or if I doe, many truths there are that I cannot assent unto; and those which I doe assent to, sometimes me thinks I do assent to them, and sometimes againe no; and when I am at the best, my assent is so misty and darke, that I almost assent to I know not what: Now I shall shew thee how much weakneſſe and doubting, in relation to this act of faith, may yet bee conſiſtent with true juſtifying faith in thee; I ſhall ſhew it for thy direction and eſtabliſhment in theſe particulars.

1. First of all, *A Chriſtian that is a true beleever, may think that he doth not aſſent unto the Word of God, when indeed he doth.* It is a knowne maxime in Divinity, That faith may be true without ſenſe of faith; True Faith is one thing, and ſenſe of faith is another; and as it is with the other acts of faith, ſo it is with this alſo: As a man may cheat himſelfe that hee doth aſſent, and conſequently truly beleeve, though all the world may ſee that he doth nothing leſſe by his irregular walking contrary to his profeſſed aſſent: So it is as true, that a Chriſtian may truly aſſent unto the truth of God, though he conceits he doth not aſſent; we are ordinarily ill Judges of the acts of our mind, becauſe they are ſecret and occult acts which traffique between the ſoule and Heaven in an inviſible way; and therefore the truth or falſhood of theſe acts is ordinarily diſcerned by the outward acts of our body, as if I hear a man profeſſing that his ſoule doth aſſent and cloſe with that portion of Gods Word, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Neither fornicaters, nor Idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate perſons, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous perſons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners ſhall inherit the kingdome of God*; and yet at the ſame time ſee hee lives in them very ſins; he ſhall pardon me, if I doe think that he doth not aſſent; and whatſoever his tongue ſpeaks, yet his heart doth not cloſe with it as a truth of Jeſus Chriſt: So on the contrary, if I hear

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a true Christian complaining that he cannot get his heart to close with the Word of God, and what ever the world thinks, he doth not assent to the truth; yet if I see this man fearing to sinne against God, and trembling at the threatning Word of God, and walking as even as he can set his feet, according to the directive part of Gods Word, that as *David*, hee makes the Word of God a light unto his feet, and a lanthern unto his paths; Let them think what they will, they shall give mee leave to think that they do assent unto, and close with the word of God. Take a proofe of it, *Jonas* 3. *v.* 5. *Ionas* there had preached against *Nineveh*, *Ionas* 3. *v.* 4. yet 40 daies, and *Nineveh* shall bee destroyed; *v.* 5. So the people of *Nineveh* beleeved God; that is, gave a full assent and credence to the Word of God, were perswaded that that which *Jonah* spake to them in the Name of the Lord, was true: But how shall we know that? the holy Ghost tels us, it was evident by the effects, they proclaimed a fast, and put on sack-cloth, from the greatest of them to the least; it was manifest by their actions, in relation to this Sermon, studying and labouring what they could to pacifie the wrath of God before the 40 daies were come about, that they did verily thinke it was a word of truth that *Jonas* spake to them, and that they were perswaded; and from this assertion of the Holy Ghost we may certainly conclude, that when wee see men living and acting according to the Word of God, and squaring their lives by the compasse of it, they doe believe [that is, assent unto it] as a word of truth, whether they will confesse so much or no: As when we see a man build houses, purchase lands, give great portions to his children, keep a great house, wee may conclude he is rich, though hee goes as if hee were not worth a groat, and though hee will tell you hee is not worth a groat. The heart is the seat of assent, and the throne of faith; confession is not essentiall, nor sense

materiall to it. Senſe of faith is comfortable, but truth and ſincere reality of faith is that which is neceſſary: Confeſſion of Faith with our lips brings glory to God externally; but it is the reality of faith in the heart, which brings glory to God internally: It is hee that doth aſſent, that *doth* the will of God; not hee alwaies that ſaith he doth it, or thinks hee doth it, *Mat.* 21. 28. We have a parable propoũnded by Chriſt to his Diſciples; it was of a man that had two ſons, and hee came to the firſt and ſaid, *Son, go worke to day in my Vineyard; he anſwered, and ſaid he would not, but yet hee repented and went:* And he came *to the ſecond, and ſaid likewiſe, and he anſwered and ſaid, I go Sir, and went not: whether of the twain (ſaith Chriſt) did the will of his Father? They ſaid unto him, The firſt.* To apply it. God ſayes unto all men, Beleeve, and cloſe with, and be perſwaded of my truth. One ſaies, I doe beleeve and aſſent; but his irregular life is ſuch, that all the world ſees he gives his tongue the lye. Another ſaies, Lord, I doe not aſſent to and beleeve it; yet he dares not ſwerve a foot from it; which of theſe, doe you think, does the will of Chriſt? Surely the latter, though he will not ſay nor thinke that hee doth it, but ſuffers his tongue to give his heart the lie: indeed, ſenſe and perſwaſion of faith is that which we ought to ſtrive after, to bee perſwaded that we do cloſe with the truth of Chriſt; but yet many a one doth that which he doth not know he doth: the Chriſtian is his own worſt Judge, and doth, and will do more a great deale for God then he will ſpeak of. But I haſten to the ſecond.

2. Secondly, *A true beleever may ſometimes doubt whether the Word of God be the Word of God, or no (or indeed may bee tempted to do it, rather then do it)* this is that which troubles many a gracious Chriſtian; Alas! they doe not beleeve the Word of God, they are troubled with many Atheiſticall and blaſphemous thoughts, that

that they cannot tell what to think; whether the Word be the Word of God, or onely (as Atheists dreame) a modell of Scripture drawne by some to keep mens consciences in awe, &c. and this makes them conclude, Tush I cheat my owne soule, to think I have Faith, when I question even the principles of Christianity, &c. and shake the foundation with one shake; and yet at the very same time, they live, close to the rule of it, and it hath a strict and severe command over their consciences. Now this I say is rather a temptation, to doubt of the truth of Gods Word in their soules, then a reall and positive doubt. The Devill is very busie in such manner of temptations; yea, even Christ himselfe was not without them, *Mat.* 4. 6. hee had set Christ upon the pinacle of the Temple, and bid him cast himselfe down; for it is written, hee shall give his Angels charge, &c. in which words I conceive, as the Devill tempted Christ in an unwarrantable way to rest upon the promise, so he also tempted him to doubt of the truth of the Scripture: As if he should have said, If the Scripture be true, and you beleeve it, try a little, throw thy selfe down, thou hast a promise to catch thee, *Psal.* 91. 11. Throw thy selfe down, and thou shalt see now how true the Scriptures are, &c. So the Devill deales with Christians often, sets upon them to deny the Scriptures, and puts such thoughts into their hearts, &c. which are but temptations, and argue not a nullity of their assent to the Scriptures, but an assault made upon their faith by Satan. But may a Christian say, If I could know this, it were something; how shall I know whether such thoughts be the spawn of unbeliefe, and proceeding from an internall cause, my own infidels heart, or whether they be, as you say, meerely the temptations of Satan, and assaults upon my faith. I shall labour to tell thee briefly, if they be temptations.

1.

First, *They are ordinarily but Disputations, and*

Queries, or determinations : Thou oftentimes hast Queries in thy soule, What should I thinke are the Scriptures, the Word of God or no? They have strange things in them, one would wonder they should be the Word of Truth; thou never comest positively to determine in thy soule, Tush, they are not the Word of God. God gives Satan leave to play the Opponent sometimes, to see what a Respondent the Beleever can be; but he alwaies keeps the office of the Moderator to himselfe, when they never go beyond a dispute in thy heart, that thou dost not determine in thy heart the contrary, nor declare with thy lips, nor practice with thy life the contrary; it is a signe they are but temptations, though they argue weakneſſe, and thou oughtest to bee troubled and humbled for them; if they were children of thy own begetting, thou wouldst nourish them better.

2. Secondly, *If they be only temptations, thou findest a striving against them.* Tell me Christian, when thou hast such an Atheisticall thought laid at the doore of thy heart, that the Scriptures are not the truth of God, what dost thou doe with it? what dost thou take it, and suckle it, and rock it, and nurse it as thy owne childe? Dost thou please thy selfe with such thoughts, and labour to coine arguments to maintaine and hug them? This is a note of a base heart: Or art thou impatient of it, but presently cryest out, Ah Lord! what a base heart have I? And dost thou labour to beat such thoughts out of thy heart, and pray against them, and never listen to any argument Satan would bring to tempt thee to the beleefe of it? I beleeve this is thy temper, and know if it bee, thou maiest have such thoughts and doubts, and yet be a true beleever.

3. Thirdly, *If it be not reall unbeleefe, but a meere temptation to unbeleefe, thy thoughts will not be long,* Jam. 4. 7. *Resist the Devill, and he will flee from you.* The Devill,

vill, if he be left to ſtand upon his own legs, is as very a coward as lives; he will come and tempt a beleever, to deny the Scriptures to be the word of truth; the beleever finds theſe filthy thoughts caſt into his heart, hee conſiders Arguments to reſiſt this temptation, cryes and prayes, and ſayes, I beleeve, Lord helpe my unbeliefe; Away goes Satan preſently, will anſwer never an argument, but yeeld the field, and the beleevers heart is fixed preſently. I mark this in 4. *Matth.* we read there of three weapons the Devill took up at Chriſt, *v.* 3. He tempteth him to diſtruſt Gods providence. Chriſt reſiſts this, *v.* 4. The Devill hath done with this, not a word more to ſay; well, hee flyes to another, *v.* 5. tempts him to preſume unwarrantably upon Gods providence, and to deny the truth of the Scriptures. Chriſt reſiſts this, *v.* 7. The Devill durſt not reply, but leaves this too; well, hee betakes himſelfe to another, *v.* 8. Chriſt reſiſts this, *v.* 10. Satan hath not a word to ſay, but the coward quits the field, packs up and gets himſelf away, *v.* 13. Try thy thoughts, are they dwelling thoughts, or tranſient? if they abide not, they are Satans, that carries bag and baggage with them when he leaves thee.

Fourthly, *Thou maieſt know if they be temptations, by thy life; thou art ſometime ready to think that the Scriptures are not the word of truth, thou canſt not aſſent to them; but at this very time durſt thou live contrary to the rule of the Scripture?* Dareſt thou now go and bee drunk and be unclean? for what now ſhould keep thee in awe? Dareſt thou? then 'tis unbeliefe. But at this very time, if thou durſt not but live according to that Word of Truth which yet thou art in doubt, whether it be the Word of truth or no, ſay what thou wilt, thou doſt aſſent unto it, and Satan would but fool thee of thy faith: Thus you have heard how a Chriſtian may doubt, or rather be tempted to doubt ſometimes, whether 4.

ther the Scriptures be the Word of Truth or no, and yet have and give a true & firm aſſent unto it as the Word of Truth; and you have heard me giving ſome notes how a Chriſtian may know, whether ſuch thoughts proceed from a principle of unbeliefe and diſſenting to the Word of truth, or from the temptations of Satan; I come to the third Concluſion, which is this;

3. Thirdly, *A Chriſtian may bee a true beleever, and yet not fully aſſent to ſome particular Truth in the Word of God:* There are many pieces of Gods Truth in Gods Word: The Word is the word of an eternall wiſdome, and of a depth too deep for us (that have but narrow capacities, and finite buckets) to finde the bottome of it: Now I conceive it is not eſſentiall to a true beleefe and aſſent, that I ſhould aſſent to every thing in the Word of God: nay, which of us *doe* it? The cauſes of this may be theſe:

1. *Ignorance.* I ſhewed you before, when I handled that point, that there may bee a great deal of ignorance conſiſting with true faith; ignorance in point of doctrine, and ignorance in circumſtantials, ignorance in divers things which are not of abſolute neceſſity to ſalvation: Now I conceive that aſſent doth alwaies imply knowledge. How ſhall they beleeve on him of whom they have not heard (was the Apoſtles queſtion:) I conceive aſſenting to a particular truth, as the truth of God, doth not conſiſt in a bare negation, but hath ſomething poſitive in it: I conceive, that I cannot be ſaid to Aſſent to all things from which I do not diſſent; but if I aſſent, I doe fully agree and cloſe with ſomething as a truth, and it hath the atteſt of my heart. Now in this regard a Chriſtian cannot bee properly and poſitively ſaid to aſſent unto any truth of God which hee doth not know, though it be contained in the Word of Truth, to which he doth fully and firmly aſſent: As for example, it was a truth that the beleeving Romans were not after Chriſt

Christ was come, tied to daies and meats, it was a truth of Gods Word; yet it is clear, *Rom.* 14. 4, 5, 6. &c. that they did not know, and were not convinced of this truth, and so consequently did not, could not assent unto this particular truth, though in Gods Word; yet it is clear, that they were true beleevers, and so consequently did assent unto the whole word of truth *conjunctim*, though not to every particular portion and piece of truth contained in that word *divisim*; there is a further revelation of truth for beleevers: *If any* (saith the Apostle) *be otherwise minded, God shall reveale this to him*; but till that revelation, there cannot be expected a full assent; onely thus far, The Christian that is the true beleever, doth not dissent from any truth in the Word of God, but prayes for the encrease of knowledge, that so his faith also may increase in the closing with the truth, and giving full assent unto the Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 3. 15.

2. *It may bee occasioned through weaknesse*: Possibly something may be taught from the Word of God, which is the Truth of God, that I heare, and cannot altogether and firmly assent unto, and close with for truth. As put case it be the baptizing of Infants, without question it is the truth of God, and a truth revealed in his Word, that Infants ought to be baptized, and it is a robbing of the child of its right, not to bring it to that holy Sacrament; yet through weakness, some that yet do assent to the Word of God, and would gladly close with every portion of Truth revealed in it, dare not assent to this particular portion of Truth, but are grieved for their weakness in it, and desire to walke up to every portion of Truth they know in the Word; shall we say their faith is not true in any clearly revealed piece of truth, because to this they cannot declare a full assent, though even from this they do not dissent, so as to deny this to be a truth, but labour after a more clear manifestation of it? God forbid;

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he that conceales the Truth in unrighteousnes, indeed cannot be said to beleeve; but hee that to some particular portion of truth (not absolutely necessary to salvation) is a debtor through weakness, I conceive cannot come alwaies within the censure of an infidell: 'Tis onee thing peremptorily to deny any particular portion of truth; and another thing not to subscribe to it, and by a present assent to close with it.

4. Fourthly, *A Christian that is a true beleever, may possibly not assent to the true meaning of Scripture, yea close with a false meaning in this or that particular place.* Beleevers judgements are not all of a Last, and many a one that doth fully and firmly assent to every tittle of Gods Word, doth not, cannot alwaies subscribe to the judgement of this or that man, or to the ordinarily received opinion of godly men concerning such or such a portion of Scripture. Scripture is very deep, who can find it out? and though the Holy Ghost hath left some shallows that the meanest Christian may wade through, yet there are also some depths which are past finding out; places, about which the learned in the World have posed themselves: We see it an ordinary experience even in the daies wherein we live, such or such an Exposition hath been received almost of all former Writers; yet when one of us commeth to examine the grounds of such or such a sense, and to weigh the context, and compare it with other places of Scripture, though we assent to the truth (if it be one) as wrapt up in some other portions of Scripture, yet wee cannot assent to it, as the truth of that place; and yet possibly it may be too, that theirs is the truth, of it and ours is the errour: Every misbeliever is not an unbeleever; nay yet further, *A man may misunderstand some places of Scripture, and thereupon hold that to bee truth which is not; (so it be not in the points that are necessary and fundamentall to salvation) and yet have true faith, and yeeld*

yeeld true assent unto the Word of God. Every particular imperfection in a righteous mans life will not argue that a man is an unrighteous man in the generall; nor every deviation from truth, argue a man an heretick; nor every mistake of truth, argue that a man doth not assent unto the truth of Gods Word. The Disciples did verily beleeve that Christ should have a reall kingdome upon the face of the earth, that should breake in pieces all other Kingdoms, and consume them utterly, as is clear, *Acts* 1.6. They asked of him, *Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* And the mother of *Zebedees* children was speaking for Courtiers places for her sons, which was but a plain and cleare mistake of that place in the 2 of *Daniel*, 44. yet who durst but say they had true faith? So, many in these daies do clearly beleeve that Christ shall reign personally here upon earth, a thousand yeeres, with his Saints (it is the Millenaries opinion) which for my part I doe not think it is true (and I think that is the opinion of the most) and I think it is a clear mistake of that place, *Revel.* 20. *v.* 4. yet I would be loth to say, that one cannot assent, and truly assent to the Word of God, that runs upon this mistake; surely such an opinion is consistent with true faith: indeed if a man doth not fully assent to those truths revealed in Scripture that hold the foundation of faith firme and stedfast, then you may suspect the truth of his pretended Faith. I come to the last Conclusion.

Acts 1,6.

Dan. 2. 44.

Rev. 20 4. and other places.

Fifthly, *A Christian may truly beleeve, and truly, and clearly assent unto the truth of God, though he cannot in all things give a cleare evidence for his assent.* This is that which puzleth many a Christian: *Alas! I cannot clearly discerne the truth of God in his Word, I may think I assent, but can I be said to assent to that which I cannot clearly see, and comprehend, and make out?* Yes, without question there are but very few truths of God which

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the Christian hath a cleare and full sight of, and gives a clear assent unto; for a clearness of assent must proceed from a clearness of knowledge. Now a truth may be clear to mans soul two waies:

1. *To the eye of his Reason.*
2. *To the eye of his Faith.*

There are some truths which are clear even to the naturall man, to the eye of his reason, as that there is a God; that wee are all gone astray from the waies of God, in which wee were first set; to these even the carnall man may give a clear attest, for hee sees a great deale of reason that demonstrates these and such like Truths unto him: But now there are some truths, which to the eye of Reason are as dark as midnight, as Christs assuming the humane nature, and the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the sublime Doctrine of Christs union with the soul, &c. Now these also in some manner are cleer to the spirituall mans eie of Faith, in regard that he doth beleeve the Word of God, & that so plainly holds out these divine Truths, it is clear to him that they are Truths, he sees a great deal of reason for him to beleeve contrary to reason; but yet when hee comes to think how should these things bee and so puzle his faith with reason, he doth not clearly then see that upon a particular enquiry, which in a generall notion seemed very clear unto him; as in particular, that Truth concerning the essentiall and reall union betwixt Jesus Christ and the soule, the true Beleever thinks hee sees it very clearly, and beleevs it very stedfastly, while he only considers the *Ens* of it, and looks upon it as it is a truth; but now when hee comes to consider how should this be, there, that knowledge which seemed clear before, appears very darke and misty; and so concerning assent which followes the knowledge of any truth. I remember a passage of a reverend Divine of our own, "There "is a manifestation of things by reason, and by revela-

tion;

"tion; an evidence direct, and not direct; an evidence "direct, and by consequence; an evidence of the thing "in it selfe, and by the effect; matters of faith are ma-"nifest by revelation, but in reason insearchable and in-comprehensible. The Divinity of the Scripture is in it selfe evident to the spirituall man; so is it that there is a providence. Other things are evident from this ground. *Ball upon Faith, p.* 22. thou maiest not judge that thou hast no faith, or that thou dost not assent to the truth of God, because every truth in the Scripture is not in it selfe evident unto thee, so as thou canst give a clear and rationall assent unto it; it may be a clear assent to the truth in generall, though not in the particulars; there it may be darke, as in that Doctrine of the Trinity: I may be perswaded, and clearly to my thinking see that there is a Trinity, it may bee a notion as clear as the Sun unto me, because I take the witnes of Gods word as a sufficient evidence to me; but yet if I wil go pose my Faith with Reason, I shall not be able from an evidence of Reason to give direct assent unto that truth: It may be clear as any thing to my Faith, That Gods essentiall presence is wholly every where; yet when I come now to looke to see this with reason, how the incomprehensible God should be wholly in this or that roome, when I come neer, I have a very dark sight, and my assent is scarce cleare to this truth: Some pictures, the further you stand off them, the more you see of them; it is a clearer sight that you have of the picture at a distance than close by it: So it is with some divine truths, they seem very clear to the Christian aloofe off, while he onely views them with the eie of his faith, and does not come neer them with the feet of his reason; but if once he drawes neer with those earthly feet to them, they seem very darke. And thus I have shewed you what doubts a Christian may meet withall in relation to his assent; what weaknesses may be incident to it,

and consistent with it, though arguing imperfection and weakness.

1. He may doubt whether hee doth assent or no, and yet at that time truly assent and close with the Word of Truth.

2. Hee may doubt whether the Scriptures bee the Word of God or no, or at least may bee tempted to doubt; and there I have given some markes by which a Christian may distinguish a temptation to doubting, from a reall doubting proceeding from unbeleefe.

3. Hee may doubt concerning some particular truths in the word of God, and through ignorance or weakness not fully assent to them, and yet fully close with the Word so far as is revealed to him.

4. Hee may doubt concerning the meaning of this or that portion of Scripture, and dissent from the (ordinarily received) truth of it, and yet truly assent to the word of God; yea, hee may mistake a Scripture, and hold that as a truth from that Scripture vpon his mistake, which is indeed an errour, and yet savingly assent to the Word of Truth, so it be not in necessary fundamentals.

Lastly, hee may not clearly by an evidence of Reason, or a direct and distinct evidence of faith, assent unto severall truths which are in the Word of God, and yet truly assent unto the Word.

Thus you see true faith may consist with much weakness; as with much imperfection and ignorance in respect of the required knowledge; so with much imperfection and doubting in relation to the act of assent: Make use of this, to see Gods goodnesse that will take such sacrifices at our hands; not to presume to hug these imperfections, but be alwaies striving against them, that thou dost not wilfully cherish any of them; there are many, and may bee many deficiencies in the understanding that God will pass over; but if they come to be the rebellions of the will, thou shalt know he is angry. It is said,

1. Caution, provided we alwaies strive against them.

said, *Rom.*4.19,20. *That Abraham staggered not through unbeleefe; Abraham doubted through infirmity though,* when he lay with *Hagar*, and bid *Sarah* say she was his sister. Strive against these weaknesses, and let them bee thine meerly through weakness (if they be) not of wilfulness; meerly of infirmity, not through unbeleefe, and the Lord is mercifull, and thy faith may be true. If thou dost stedfastly assent to all the Truth of God, that is the foundation of faith, and necessary to salvation, and fully and impartially close with the whole Word of God, and every particular portion of truth in it, when it is once clear to thee that it is a syllable of that Word of Truth, and livest a life answerable to it, though for the present thou thinkest thou dost not assent, & though thou maiest be tempted sometimes to doubt of the whole Scripture, and though thou maiest doubt concerning some particular truths that are taken for truths, and are so, and concerning this or that portion of Scripture, and maiest take up that as a truth which is an errour from it, and though thou maiest not for the present by a clear evidence of reason, or a direct and distinct evidence of faith assent unto severall truths which are in the word, provided,

1. *That thou assentest to all truths that are necessarily to be beleeved to salvation, and the foundations of Faith.*

2. *Provided thou strivest against other doubtings, and laboures to get a sense of Faith, and a strength to resist the Devils temptations, and to be convinced of every particular truth,* and of thy errour (if it be one) which thou hast taken up from some mistaken portion of Scripture, and labourest for a more cleare and distinct knowledge of every truth, that so thy assent may be more clear every day then other.

SERM.

SERM. IX.

1 IOH. 12.

To as many as received him, he gave power to be called the ſons of God, even to thoſe that believed in his Name.

I Have ſhewed you what weakneſſes may conſiſt with true ſaving Faith in reference to its firſt act, *viz.* its act of aſſent. The ſecond Act of Faith which I inſtanced in, was, the *Act of receiving the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* You have heard from this very Text of Scripture, that,

Prop. *It is an act of true Faith for the ſoule to receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

V. Serm. 6. I have heretofore ſhewed you, 1. *Wherein the nature of this Act conſiſts.* 2. *I have proved that it is an act of juſtifying Faith.*

The reaſons why I inſtance in this as an intermediate act of Faith between *Aſſent and reliance*, I told you before, and indeed one main one was; becauſe I have found it in my little experience an eaſier matter to convince

vince poor wounded Christians, that they have received the Lord Jesus Christ, then that they rely upon the Lord Jesus Christ; (though indeed there be graines of reliance must go into this act of Reception:) But although I have found it easier to convince the soul of the one then of the other; yet I have not found it easie to convince a doubting soule of either. But I have met with this complaint from some.

Alas! Sir, I have not the least grain of saving faith in my soule, I have not so much as received the Lord Jesus Christ: I am so far from finding, that my soul hath cast it selfe upon the promise, and wholly relies upon it, and adheres to it, that I cannot find it hath so much as kissed or embraced the promise, or in any degree closed with it.

Now my work shall be, laying this for a foundation (which you have already heard sufficiently proved.)

Prop. *That to receive the Lord Jesus Christ is an act of true justifying faith;*

I say, laying this for a foundation, my worke at this time shall be,

1. Chiefly, *To rectifie the mistakes of such gracious soules as may apprehend they have not yet received the Lord Jesus Christ in the promises of the Gospel;* and

2. I shall *from the consideration of the truth of the proposition infer something by way of application, that may be profitable to such as have indeed not received Christ.*

CHAP.

CHAP. 9.

Something spoken by way of satisfaction to poor doubting Christians that are under a mistake, apprehending that they have not yet received the Lord Iesus Christ in the promises of the Gospel—— Together with some application directed to them who indeed have not so received the Lord Iesus Christ.

I Shall begin with the first, and to that purpose,

1. *Consid.* Consider (Christian!) *thou maiest have received Christ, though thou doest not know it or wilt not acknowledge it.*

1. The Sun of righteousnesse may have shined upon thee, though thou dost not discerne it in reflexions: Christ may bee in the house, and yet bee hid, it may bee thou dost not know it; but yet this is something hard to be sure. Secondly, Thy soule may have received Christ, and yet perhaps thou wilt not acknowledge it; gracious soules are modest and suspicious: or perhaps the devill may speak for them. 1. It may be *it is the modesty of thy soule*; thou saiest, *what am I, and what is my father's house, that I should think God hath brought me hither too*; that I should think I have received Jesus Christ, and have power given me to be the son of God. As *David* said, *seemeth it to you a small thing to be son in law to a King?* So many Christians, will deny rather then acknowledge their graces. Alas? seemeth it to you a small thing *to receive the Lord Jesus Christ?* is it nothing think you? Alas! It is a great thing, my soule is not acquainted with such a mystery of the Kingdome: if this be all, this is sinfull.

2. But

2. But secondly, it may be *suspition and overmuch jealousie*; Christians are jealous creatures: the Devill perswades them Christ doth not love them, and they need not much perswasion, their owne soules are apt enough, their corruptions are enough to perswade them they have not received Christ: what such a slipping, backsliding creature? should I thinke I have received Christ, had I received him, should I not walk closelier with him, &c? 2.

3. Possibly *the Devill speaks for them*: Aske them if they have received the Lord Jesus Christ, or let them aske themselves, the Devill answers no: they are under some heavy temptations, it is a darke time with them. And when the Devill speakes in Saints, they speake strange language; *Peter said, and sware he knew not the man*, that he had converse long enough with to have known, and cause enough to have acknowledged. Christian thou maiest have received the Lord Jesus Christ, though thou dost not know it perfectly, though thou for the present wilt not acknowledge it thankfully. Let that be the first consideration. 3.

Secondly, Consider. *There are many waies by which a soule may be said to have received Christ, and thou maiest have received him sufficiently, though not perfectly.* I say *sufficiently*, I doe not mean so *enough*, that thou shalt not need labour and study after a more perfect receiving of him; but *sufficiently*, that is enough to let thee know thou hast justifying faith, although not perfectly. I say there are many waies of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. 1. *There is a receiving of Christ into the understanding onely*: A receiving of the notion of Christ by *common illumination*, which may have also some common and slight worke upon the affections. So *Mat.* 13. 20. they that received the word into *stony ground*, were such as *heard the Word, and anon received it with joy*, they received the Notion, and were pleased 2. Mat. 13. 20.

with it, and tooke ſome delight in it.

2. 2. There is a receiving of Chriſt, *when the will and affections are carried out to the embracing of the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and the promiſes of Jeſus Chriſt to cloſe with them*: this is the receiving of Chriſt which I have opened to you, and this is ſuch a receiving of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as I call *ſufficient*, that is enough, to evidence a worke of true faith in the ſoule. Enough to let thee know thou haſt received him, ſo that thy ſoule may be encouraged comfortably to go on and build up higher in thy ſpirituall building, upon this foundation, Chriſt being the *chiefe corner ſtone*, of this the Text ſpeakes of; *To as many as received him hee gave power to be the ſons of God. Thus the Gentiles received the Word of God:* Act. 11.v.1. and the men of *Berea*, Act 17.v.11.

Acts 11. 1.
Acts 17. 11.

3. 3. There is a *receiving of Chriſt, as our ſanctification a receiving of the will and law of Chriſt*, to walk and live in Chriſt, and according to his preſcript; ſo poſſibly may that place bee underſtood, Col. 2. 6. *As you have received Chriſt, ſo walke in him.* Now this may be more perfect or imperfect; More perfect, when the ſoule walkes fully with God, and findes an higher power to act ſanctification, or more imperfect, when it in ſomething walkes according to the rule, but is ſenſible of abundance of weakneſſes, in many things it failes. Now there is no ſoule that hath received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as its Saviour, but in ſome degree hath alſo received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as its refiner and ſanctifier. But of ſtars, *ſome differ from others in glory.*

Col. 2. 6.

4. 4. *There is a receiving of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in his conſolations*; a ſenſible receiving of Chriſt in reflexions of love; like *Simeons* receiving him, when he tooke him up in his armes, and ſang, *Now Lord let thy ſervant depart in peace according to thy word, for my eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* Now I ſay thou maieſt have received

Luke 2.

ved the Lord Jesus Christ *truly*, and sufficiently to give thee a comfortable evidence of the true work of Faith in thy soule, though thou hast not yet received him so perfectly as others in his power to thy sanctification, or in the reflexions, and manifestations of his love to thy consolation.

But thirdly, to answer more positively and directly yet to thy consolation: Consider, *if thou beest willing to receive him, thou either hast or shalt receive him*; if thy soule be but open, the King of glory will *enter in*: when *Lydia's* heart began to *open*, the Lord Jesus Christ was coming into her soule. Christ had knock'd before she open'd the door, *Rev.* 22.13. *Whosoever will, let him drinke of the water of life freely.* This is a sure rule, if thy heart be open, Christ is halfe way in, *Rev.* 3.20. *Behold I stand at the doore and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* I pray you mark those words. 1. Christ stands at the door and knocks. 2. There is an hearing of his voice. 3. There is an opening the doore 4 The doore being open Christ will come in to him. 5. Being come in he will sup with him, and he shall sup with him. Christ hath stood at the doore and knocks, this is vocation, he stands at the door and knocks; ineffectually, or effectually. Many are call'd, many doores are knockt at, ah, but the doores are lockt, and barr'd and nailed up. Many have their hearts hardned, Christ cannot perswade them to open: at some doores he knocks effectually, he knocks hard to make them hear; well, *Hearing his voice* is the next, heart-hearing is that which is meant, effectuall hearing when the understanding is enlightened, and the judgement convinced effectually: All this while Christ stands but at the doore, these are but the workes of his power; well, the next thing is, *The opening the doore*, the door is *the will of the creature*: if any man opens

3. Rev. 22.13. Rev. 3.20.

the doore, (it must be by power derived from him) but if he does open the door wide ope, if he does spread out his will, and become willing to receive Christ, why then saith Christ, *I will come in*; I will justifie and sanctifie him, I will come in, to purge and cleanse him; nay if he opens I will come in, and he shall sup with with me and I with him, and I will nourish and maintaine him, and feast him, &c.

Hark Christian, art thou willing to open the doore, art thou willing to receive Christ, then thou hast received him in part, and thou shalt receive him in perfection. *He giveth to will:* It is nothing but this cursed will of ours that hinders any of our souls from *receiving Christ*; doe not say it is any thing, I tell you once againe it is nothing but your cursed wils: It is nothing but the keeping your doores bolted, and lockt; if you would receive, you should receive. Art thou therefore willing Christian? thou that thinkest thou hast not received Christ; Art thou willing to receive him? Alas! you will say, this is to set open heavens gate at a great wideness. Ah, but there is a manifold willingness

1. 1. There is a *willingness to receive him as a Priest, not as a King*; as a guest, but not an indweller.

2. 2. There is a lazy willingness, a counterfeit willingness, and a reall active willingnesse.

1. 1. *It may be thou art willing to receive Christs righteousnesse to cloath thee, but not his Spirit to sanctifie thee*; to receive him as thy Priest, but not to rule over thee: Thy doore is but halfe ope, Christ will not come in upon those termes; the doore must bee ope wider then so.

2. 2. *It may be thou art willing to have him come in as a guest, but not as an inhabitant*; thou art willing for a day or two to be commanded by him, but thy heart is not constant with him, thou art not willing that hee should dwell in thy heart for ever, the doore is not open yet.

3. *It*

3. *It may be thou art willing by fits*; one houre thou art willing, another thou art not; Christ cannot keepe thee of a minde two daies together, thou openest the doore a little, and then clapst it too againe: *thy goodnes is like the morning dew*, the doore is not ope enough, it must be set ope; not so ope that every puffe of winde will clap it too again. 3

4. *It may be thy willingnes amounts to no more, then I care not though it be so; I could be content it were so, a lazy, counterfeit, dead willingnes*, meerely pretended, never declared, never pursued by Acts: thou wilt not so much as put thy hand or foot to the doore to hold it ope; this will not doe (Christian!) But art thou truly willing that Jesus Christ should come in in state to thy soule, so to wash thee, and to cleanse thee; to rule in and over thee, not for a night, but for ever? and is this thy constant temper, is it alwaies thy voice? O come Lord Jesus! Come! take possession, doe all in me, and for me, &c. And art thou not lazy but active, that thy willingnesse may be seen not to be pretended in hypocrisie, but in truth. Rejoyce, I say rejoyce Christian! Go on chearefully, salvation is come to thy house. Thy willingnes will bee further examined in the fourth consideration. 4.

4. Consider. *If thou hast earnest hungrings and thirstings, strong desires and pantings after the Lord Jesus Christ; thou either hast received him, or art receiving of him, and hast true justifying Faith.* 4.

The hungrings and true pantings of a soule after the Lord Jesus Christ I cannot say they are *actuall embracings, and layings hold of the Lord Jesus Christ*; but (if they be not) they are very neer it, they are the stretchings forth of the soules hand, to lay hold and imbrace; they are not onely loud signes of true habituall faith, but I may say buddings of Actuall faith: they are indeed, the *minimum quod sic* as we say, the least that can bee;

they are flowers in Chriſts Garden that he breaths upon. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*: They are faith in the Cradle. Canſt thou therefore ſay, that as the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo thy ſoule pants after God? Haſt thou inſatiate deſires to be taſting of him? I ſay, thou either haſt received him, or art receiving of him. Indeed I cannot ſay that earneſtly, to pant and hunger after Chriſt is *formally to beleeve or to receive him*, but it is *materially*, and by *concomitancy to beleeve and receive him*. But you will ſay upon this ſcore, it were pity any one ſhould live that doth not receive the Lord Jeſus in this manner, by deſiring him, and thirſting after him. What I ſaid before concerning differences of Willing, I may alſo apply here concerning Deſiring; It is one thing to deſire Chriſts Blood, another thing to deſire Chriſts Law: One thing to deſire Chriſt to help at a pinch, another to deſire him to dwell with us: It is one thing, in a fit, to cry out with *Balaam, O that I might dye the death of the righteous!* another thing to have that conſtant frame of ſpirit that will be no more ſatisfied without Chriſt than *Rachel* was, or could be without children. It is finally one thing to pretend, another thing to have a deſire; and the difference will be plaine, for who ſo meerly pretends will act but lazily, but who ſo really deſires, and ſtrongly deſires, will not leave God night nor day, will not ceaſe the doing of its utmoſt to obtaine. But I paſs over this, and ſhall name but one note more.

5. Laſtly therefore, *If any thing of Chriſt ſupports thee, or hath ſupported thee: if it be or hath been at any time glad tidings to thy ſoule*, thou maieſt know thou haſt received Chriſt; if thou haſt at any time embraced a Promiſe, though (it may be) thou maieſt have let it go againe, yet I ſay, if at any time thou haſt embraced it, if there was a meeting betwixt thy Soul and the Promiſe, and they cloſed, I ſay then thou haſt received; yet it

may

may be thou haſt been in ſome deep dejection or horror; and thou haſt been ready to make away thy ſelfe, or the like: what was it ſupported thee at ſuch a time and kept thee up from doing of it? was it ſome Goſpell-Tidings, of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſome Goſpell-Promiſe, that thou canſt now ſay with *David, Remember now thy word, upon which thou haſt cauſed thy ſervant to hope?* And *I had periſhed in my Affliction* if ſuch a Promiſe had not relieved me. I ſay, if Chriſt or the Promiſes ever afforded thee ſupport and ſolid comfort in an evill day, thou didſt then embrace and receive him or them: it may be ſince thy faith hath been ill kept, and growes worſe for want of Exerciſe.

None ever could ſtay upon the Lord that did not truſt in his name. But I ſhall adde no more in order to the ſatisfaction, and conſolation of Chriſtians labouring under this burthen; and indeed what I have ſaid to this whole caſe may ſerve but as an Uſe of Conſolation for ſuch, as though they have, yet are ready to thinke they have not received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I ſhall now proceed a little further in application of it to others.

Uſe.

And from hence let us be inſtructed, *upon what ſad termes every child of the Devill is damned, and ſuch eſpecially as live in places where the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is preached*; they will be damned for not *Receiving Chriſt*, for not opening the doore of their hearts, and ſtretching out their hearts in deſires and pantings after Chriſt, for not cloſing with an offered Chriſt and Promiſe; your damnation will not be (Sirs) for not meriting Chriſt; No, God never required that at your hands. God never required you ſhould earne him, he requires nothing but that you ſhould receive him, that you ſhould be willing, and your hearts ſhould be open to let in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that you ſhould hunger and thirſt after him, and cloſe with him, not pay a penny, only take, and that freely. Ah Lord! upon what ill termes will the men of this

Inſtr. 1.

this Generation go downe to hell? Men thinke to lay their damnation an other day at Gods doore; and to ſay, Lord, we could not beleeve, thou never electedſt us, nor gaveſt us faith, and Chriſt, *&c.* But friend, God will let thee know that thy damnation is of thy ſelfe. Mr *Fenner* hath noted that in that Chapter of *Ezekiel*, 18. *cap.* God hath freed his three wills from the damnation of any. 1. *His ſecret will*, I have no pleaſure (ſaith he) in the death of him that *dieth*. 2. *His revealed will*; God ſaies, *Repent and turne, ſo ſhall not iniquity be your ruine.* 3. *His permiſſive will*; *Make* you (ſaith God) a new *heart* and a *new ſpirit*. And finally, he caſts all the fault of their damnation upon their own *rebellious wils*; *Why* (ſaith he) *will you dye O yee houſe of Iſraell* Friends! Is there any of you before me this day that have no part nor portion in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? For the Lords ſake let what you have heard ſinke upon your thoughts, *Perditio tua ex te, O Iſrael.* Sinners, your damnation is of your ſelves: if you *will* be ſaved you may. Heaven goes a begging this day, whoſoever *will* let him drinke of the water of life freely; it may be ſome of you have been great ſinners, ſome of you old corrupted ſinners: yet if *you will*, I ſay, if *you will*, you may drinke of the water of life freely; if *you will*, you may be the *Sons of God*, Heires, joynt Heires with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. You that are children of wrath, if *you will*, you may be Heires of Grace. Behold Chriſt ſtands at the doore and knocks: this day he knocks once more; he cries, whoſoever *will*, *Whoſoever hath eares to heare, let him heare*, if you will not heare, it is not becauſe Chriſt wants an heart, but becauſe you want Eares: Chriſt cals, *Ho every one that thirſteth, come yee to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eate: yea, come buy wine and milke without money, and without price; hearken diligently unto me, and eate that which is good, and let your ſoule delight it ſelfe in fatneſs. Incline your eare and come unto me,*

Fenners wilful impenitency, *page* 2.

me, heare and your ſoule ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David, Iſa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Remember (Sirs) *Hieruſalem* might have been *gathered*, even *as a Hen gathereth her chickens under her wings*, but ſhe *would not*; if you *will not*, Chriſt hath waſhed his hands of your bloud: your *damnation is of your ſelves.* And ah! think, (poore creatures!) thinke what bad termes theſe are to be damned upon: what a gnawing upon your conſcience in hell another day will it be to thinke, If *I would* I might have been ſaved; Heaven and glory might have been mine if *I would*, but now I am tormented, and ſhall be ſo for ever, becauſe *I would not* have the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; this makes damnation the heavier, to thinke, There is no more required but only to open the doore to *receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* I ſay it makes it the heavier as well as the juſter.

Let me only adde one branch of Application more. Is this a truth, that it is an act of true faith to *Receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*? What to open the will, and with ſtrong deſires and pantings after him, is it no more but to cloſe with him, what no more but to receive him? Then *Why will you dye, O you ſinfull people!* I beſeech you now *Receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Be willing to be ſaved; you remember what Argument the *Syrian's* ſervants uſed to perſwade him to go, *Waſh in Jordan and be cleane*, 2 King. 5. 13. It is ſaid, *His ſervants came near and ſpake unto him, and ſaid, My Father! if the Prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he only ſaith unto thee, waſh and be cleane.* When the Prophet firſt bad him waſh and be cleane, *Go, and waſh in Iordan ſeven times and thy fleſh ſhall come againe, and thou ſhalt be cleane*, ver. 10. the man was *wroth*, and went away in a techy humour, he thought the Prophet *would have come out to him, and have ſtood and have call'd upon the name of the Lord his*

Exhor.

2 King. 5. 13.

God, and have stroke his hand upon the place and recovered him; was not *Abana* and *Parphar* as good as *Iordan*, &c. It may be thou art going away teachy. God saies, *Receive the Lord Iesus*, and thou shalt be saved, it may be thou art going away angry; thou lookest that God should have saved thee whether thou wouldst or no; that God should have saved thee, and let thee have stood with thy hands in thy pockets: Or have sent thee only to the *Abana* and *Parphar* of thy own righteousnes: let thee have done something, some good thing, that thou mightest have everlasting life. But let me come neare thee Christian! My friend! Poore sinner! if the Lord had required some great thing of thee, wouldst thou not have done it?

1. If the Lord had set thee upon earning Heaven by Pilgrimages, by selling all that thou hast, and giving to the poore, wouldst thou not have done it? If he had askt the bloud of thy body for the ransome of the sin of thy soule, wouldst thou not have given it? How much more when he only saith to thee, *Receive the Lord Iesus Christ*; *Take* and *live*; *Receive*, but, and thou art *Received*

2. Behold! he *stands at the doore* and *knocks*: he is willing, he is willing, he stands at the doore and knocks: thy opening is after his knocking; he knocks this day, he cals to thee, (Ah Lord! Breake ope the doore that will not open!) thou art prevented with love, he stands at the doore, and knocks before thou canst have the least thought of opening; Hark (sinner!) heare him knocking; Turne, *turne, why will ye dye* O house of Israel? heare him calling, Drunkard, Vaine person, Swearer, Sabbath breaker, turne, open the doores of your hearts. *Scarlet, crimson sinners*, open, receive mercy; dost thou know he knocks, and wilt thou not open? Is he content to come downe and stand at thy gate, and canst thou bee content to let him stand without thy gate? The King

King of Glory knocks sinner, is it not civilitie to open?

3. *Hast thou not opened to worse guests many a time.* The Devill hath knockt, and thou hast ran and opened, lusts have knockt, and thou hast opened to them; thou hast opened thy door to strangers: hast thou not been willing to break Sabbaths, to be vain, wanton, &c. hast thou kept open house for these, and is thy door onely lockt to the Lord Jesus Christ; hast thou opened to thine enemies, and wilt thou not to thy friends? 3.

4. *Who is he that knocks?* Is it not the King of Glory; he that could break thy body and soule in pieces, he that could damne thee as easily as save thee; that could as easily say, let such a soule be sent to hell, as let such a wretch *receive me.* Is it not *the King of Glory?* hee that is received of Saints and Angels, and received and accepted of his Father: Is it not salvation that is come to thy house? 4.

5. *How long hath he stood?* and *yet he stands*; doe not his locks begin to be *wet with the dew of the Night?* hath he not knockt many a day, hath he not stood many an hour knocking, calling sinner! When? ah when? how long before thou open? and yet *he stands*: The words, *Rev.* 3. 20. are ἰδοὺ ἕστηκα, *Behold I have stood;* hee hath stood, and hee doth stand, *Rom.* 2. 4. Sinner, *despisest thou the riches of his goodnesse, and forbearance and long suffering? knowest thou not that the goodnes of God leades thee to repentance?* Let me tell thee, *Thou treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.* But besides: 5. Rev. 3. 20. Rom 2. 4.

6. *Will hee stand and knock alwaies thinkest thou?* will he be alwaies walking by the Vineyard, expecting fruit? will hee alwaies with patience walk by the Figtree? may not his patience at last be wearied out, and such a word slip, as *never fruit grow on thee more*: Now never Sermon worke upon you, never shall my blood

bee offer'd to you more; or if you hear it shall, it shall be a *savour of death to death*; it shall be, *that seeing you may see and not perceive, and hearing you may hear and not understand, lest your soule should convert and bee healed*: if you goe away, and refuse to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, now it may be you may never have him offer'd more.

7 7. *Will not hee pay the charge of a doore opening to him?* he will give thee power to bee the son of God. Saint *John* was astonished at this priviledge, 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestow'd upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* Is it a small thing to you saith *David* for one to be the *Son in law* to a King? But sinners! is it a small thing to you to be called the sons of the great God? *I will come in to him* (saith Christ) *Rev.* 3. 20. and sup with him, and he shall sup with me. I will feast him, strengthen, nourish him. Ah sinners, open, receive him, that you that are the children of wrath, may have power given you to become the sons of God; and if sons, then heires of grace: you that are now heirs of wrath, and Hell, shall become heires of grace, and joynt heirs with Christ. Ah! but you will say what shall we do to receive him? you have heard wherein the work of receiving lies; be willing, open your hearts: be desirous of him, pant after him, thus stretch out your hands, close with him. But all this is Gods act, as to the power by which wee must doe it: God must give the soule power to open, &c. But that God may not deny thee but give thee power,

1 Ioh. 3. 1.

1. 1. *Though thy will of it selfe can do nothing for him, yet let it do nothing against him, though thou canst not open thy door, yet doe not locke up thy doore.* Many poor wretches lock up their hearts against Christ; they make their hearts as an adamant, they will not hear; though thou canst not will grace, yet doe not will sinne: thou wilt

wilt sinne (doe what thou canst) but doe not will sinne; let not the full current of thy heart bee towards sinning, and rebellion against God.

2. *Be not obstinate against the meanes of grace*; bee willing to hear, and to attend upon God in his ordinances: this thou maiest do, be willing to receive instruction into thine eare, to incline thy heart and hear; Gods way to the heart lies through the ear, this is the hole of the door by which Christ puts in his hand. 2.

3. *Do not only hear, but when thou hast heard, doe what in thee lies to obey*: that thou maiest not bee like one that looketh his naturall face in a glasse, and then goeth away and forgetteth what manner of person he hath been. Thou canst not do all, thou canst do nothing effectually, do what thou canst; hoist up the sailes, it may be God will come with a wind. 3.

Lastly, *Cry mightily to God, and get others to cry for thee.* The blind men in the Gospel cried, *O that they might receive their sight.* Cry thou mightily, O that I might receive my Saviour; Give me Christ, or else I die. 4.

Pray the Lord to open thy heart, to stirre up thy affections, to learne thee the mysterious art of closing with Jesus Christ in a promise: The mysterious art of saying, my Lord, and my God. Art thou jealous thou shalt not be heard thy selfe; hast thou any godly friends or acquaintance, set them upon working with God for thee: art thou acquainted with Godly ministers? set them upon pleading for thee; bee not ashamed to let them know the condition of thy soule. God saies to *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 20. 7. concerning *Abraham*; *He is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live*; and accordingly hee did, *v.* 17. God gives this advice to *Job*, *Job* 42. 8. Take you a sacrifice, *and go* to my servant *Job*, and 1. *Offer up for your selves a burnt offering*, and then, 2. *He shall pray for you*, for him will Gen. 20. 7. *v.* 17. Job 42. 8.

I *accept*. First offer up an offering for your selves, cry mightily unto God, presse hard with him in your owne interest; then set Gods servants upon pleading, for them the Lord will *accept*, their prayers are his delight. Thus use all meanes to *receive the Lord Jesus Christ*: For a repeated motive take but my text.

For *to as many as receive him, he gives power to be the sons of God; even to them that believe in his Name.*

SERM.

SERM. X.

MAR. 9:24.

Lord I beleeve, helpe thou my unbeleefe.

I Am shewing you what imperfections may bee in the actings of true faith in a gracious soule. I have already shewed you what weaknesses, and imperfections may incomber a soule in its act of assent. 2. What mistakes may attend a gracious soule in its act of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, and what imperfections a Christian may have in that act. I am now come to the third Act, *viz.* A Christians act of Reliance; To shew you how a Christian may bee mistaken in reference to the truth of that act in his soule, which I shall doe by shewing of you what particular weaknesses, and imperfections, that act of Faith is capable of, yet retaining its truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. 10.

Concerning those weaknesses which may consist with true faith in a gracious soule, in reference to its third act, viz. *its act of adherence; and how to satisfie the soule that conceives it doth not truly rely upon Christ, because it doth not find that it can rely so fully and constantly as it desires, nor upon all the promises alike.*

ALas! (saies a poore soule) *I cannot think that I do really rest and roll my selfe upon Jesus Christ and the promises for eternall life; when I doe rest, as I think, I am ready again to think I do not, and if I bee in a frame of heart one day, that I thinke that now I can roll my selfe upon Christ and trust his promises, another day again I can trust nothing; if sometimes I doe cleave to the Word of life as sweet and pretious, and imbrace it as true, and prize Christ, and valne his word above all sensuall delights whatsoever, and hunger and thirst after it and after Christ; another while againe I cleave to a sensuall good more then to a spirituall promise, or an heavenly Christ; and besides I cannot rely upon God for the fulfilling of every promise; there are some of Gods promises that I thinke I could rest upon God for fulfilling of; others againe I cannot for my life (though I am perswaded that they are equall words of truth with the other) trust God for, nor can I be fully perswaded that the promises do really and peculiarly belong to me.* Now to satisfie the soul in this particular, I will shew you what doubtings and weaknesses may be in the soule, and yet the soule at that time may have received, and may rest, and rely, and roll it selfe upon the Lord Jesus Christ for the promises of

of salvation, and may at the same time have true saving justifying faith; this is my worke to which I am to addresse my selfe.

Know for thy comfort.

First, *Thou maiest fully and wholly rely thy soule upon Jesus Christ, and yet not beleeve thou dost fully and wholly rest*: Reliance and dependance is necessary to Faith, not full perswasion of such a reliance, I meane justifying faith; Reliance is a necessary act of Faith, full perswasion of such a reliance is a comfortable act of Faith; depending and relying is the act of this hand (helped by Gods Spirit;) full perswasion of this reliance is more the shining of Gods face then the act of our soules; Labour more to get evidences of the truth of thy act of faith then of the degrees of it; Christ may bee in the room, and yet not seen, he may be in the midst of thy heart, and saying, *Peace bee to this soule*, and yet the doores of thy sense be shut: Heaven is a thing unseen, and he that measureth his faith by his eye, may call an Ephah an Omer, especially if thou wilt not thinke that thou hast faith, unlesse thou canst see a truth of the very act, and refuse to take an evidence for thy sense from the effects of Faith: The acts of the mind are secret acts, of which (as I said before) we are very ill Judges; Resting and relying upon Christ is an act of the minde, and is a hidden and mysticall act, which we cannot weigh in any scales, to try whether it bee full weight yea or no: here's the trouble of many Christians, aske them whether they rest and rely upon Jesus Christ for salvation yea or no, they will tell you, they cannot think they doe; yet they will confesse, that if they doe not relie upon him, they relie upon nothing: their sinnes and duties, their morality and civility they have utterly disclaimed, and will cry out of these as menstruous clothes and filthy rags, yea and confesse that they would not, they durst not sinne against God for a world; yet they cannot 1.

thinke they rest truly upon Christ for salvation, though they will confesse they desire it, and hope they do it, and they make the Law of Christ the rule of their lives, and they have a secret soule-enflaming love to Christ; but because they cannot understand the secret mysterie of the internall act, therefore they will not, they cannot flatter their soules into a faith and apprehension that they do trulie beleeve, when indeed there is no act of the mind, the nature of which, and truth of which, wee can discover from the knowledge of it clearly in it selfe, but must be forced to examine the truth and falshood of it by the effects; and it must bee the infinite and rare worke of God to perswade our sense of the truth of our faith; may it not be possible, think you, to finde one that is beautifull, very beautifull, and yet all her friends shall not perswade her that she hath any beauty at all? wee may have that which wee will not be knowne of: The woman hath seen her face in a false glasse, or doth not know what beauty is, and therefore will not be perswaded by other mens eies to rectifie her owne judgement: So it is with Beleevers, they may have a beautifull face of faith, and yet not think so.

2. Secondly, *A Christian may have a true faith, and truly rely upon Christ, and really think he doth not at all trust and rely upon Jesus Christ.* Sense in a Christian may not onely have a mist cast before its eies, but have its eies clearly put out. Suppose a man had put up a Petition to the King for some place of honour and trust, this Petition lies unanswered a great while, at last the King answers this Petition, and grants that place or dignity to him; the Subject being at a distance from the Prince, may have this place or honour conferred, and yet not know of any such matter, but verily beleeve his Petition lies like a cast paper, hath he not his dignity because he knowes it not? Christians are misjudging creatures, and too ready to suspect their owne happinesse, they may

may call their resting and beleeving, presumption, their faith, boldnesse: The Hypocrite cals his drosse Gold, his Alchymie Silver, and the selfe-suspecting Christian is as ready on the other hand, to call his Gold Brasse, and his Silver Lead: It is a rare thing to finde a Christian that will look his gracious face in a true Glasse, the modest creature is afraid he should be proud, if hee should look upon his beauty: Heaven may bee hid under the dark and cloudy apprehensions of a terrible, dismall hell: Christ may be saying in Heaven, Thou art saved, Thou art saved, while thou art saying upon earth, O, I am damned, I am damned! The Angels may bee keeping holy-day for thee there, while thou art keeping Fridaies here: There may be joy in heaven for the same cause, and at the same time for which and in which there may be sorrow on earth; thou maiest have more friends in Heaven then thou knowest of; Christ at that very time may be pleading hard at Heavens Barre for thee, while thou art thinking hee is reading an Enditement against thee; thou maiest at that time have Christ in thy armes, when thou thinkest he is as far from thy soul as Heaven from Hell: From hence will follow,

Thirdly, *Thou maiest question and doubt whether thou doest truly rest or no, and yet truly rest; Disputing argues weaknesse of the act, and want of sense, but not a totall want of the act.* This is lesse then the other, but I have mentioned it, because I have found this to bee the temper of many Christians: pinch upon that point, aske them whether they wholie rest and relie upon Christ for salvation; they dare not tell you they thinke they do not, nor they think they doe; but they cannot tell what to thinke, they know not whether they do or no; though they dare not conclude the falshood and nullitie, yet they dare not assert the realitie and veritie of any act of Faith in their soules, they live at great incertainties, and this makes them thinke they doe not 3.

beleeve. They are ſure diſputing is no beleeving.

To this I anſwer in this concluſion;

That thou maieſt make a queſtion whether thou beleeveſt or no, and yet truly beleeve. It is true, diſputing is no beleeving; but though they bee not things of the ſame nature, yet they are not ſo ill neighbours but they may dwell under the ſame roofe of the ſoul.

1. Firſt, *Thou maieſt doubt whether thou beleeveſt or no, and yet beleeve*; this is not a queſtion about the object of Faith in which thou maieſt for all this remaine unſhaken, but meerlie about thy act of Faith; thus diſputing, thou doſt not diſpute whether the promiſe bee true or no, but whether thou art (as thou ſhouldeſt bee) perſwaded of the truth of it, and doſt (as thou ought eſt) reſt upon it for a word of truth; and yet ſome diſputes and doubtings about the object are not inconſiſtent with faith, as I have ſhewed before. It is a ſoule-deſtroying opinion which ſome *Libertines* have hatched in theſe daies, that a Chriſtian ought not to queſtion the truth of his Faith: Such an unbeleefe ſhuts not men out of Heaven, nor argues a nullitie of Faith: *Paul* was wrapt up into the third Heaven, whether in the body he could not tell, or whether out of the body hee could not tell, yet without queſtion *Paul* was wrapt up in the body, if wrapt up at all: The Beleever may bee in the like doubt concerning his Faith that S. *Paul* was concerning his rapture, and yet have reall true Faith; though wee ought not to contemne our ſelves in it, yet we may know for our comfort, that wee may go diſputing our faith to Heaven, and many a one hath ſuch an hot diſpute with his owne ſoule, that his death is forced to prove the Moderator when he receives his end of his Faith, even the ſalvation of his ſoule. And thus I have ſhewed you in three particulars, how the Chriſtian may doubt concerning his reſting and relying upon Chriſt, and yet truly relie.

1. Hee

1. Hee may question whether hee truly relies or not.

2. He may not be able to affirme nor thinke that he doth truly relie; yea further, he may through a misjudging himselfe think he doth not rely, and notwithstanding all this truly and really relie and rest. Now these kinds of misgivings may arise from severall causes: God may please for his ends to keep the soule in darkenesse, to keep it humble, and to keep it in a strict way of adherence, *&c.* But I shall rather meddle with the subordinate and instrumentall causes, and assigne three or foure causes.

The first *may be blindnesse and ignorance*, there may be, yea is a great deale of darknesse in the soule; there was a thick darknesse surprized *Adams* understanding when he fell, and this still clouds all the children of *Adam*: we are not able to discerne or judge of the nature of the internall acts of the mind; we cannot come to a certaine knowledge of them as they are in themselves, but as I said before, must judge them by the effects: the soule doth not understand what affiance is, and this makes her question whether she doth rely or no, and not think she doth, being never ready to thinke well of her selfe. 1.

A second cause may be the Devils temptations; such winds will make strong houses shake sometimes: It is Satans great designe to keep the soule from beleeving, and if he cannot keep the edifice of Faith from being built in the soule, yet he will keep it (if possible) from standing sure. *Luk.* 22.31. *Simon, Simon,* (saith Christ) *Satan hath desired to winnow thee like wheat*; the word signifies to shake up and down, as in a fan wheat is used, the kernels scarce ever lye still: Satan is almost alwaies shaking the Christian by the shoulders, he desires to winnow them; and as with *Job*, because he had no power over his life, he executed his power to the utmost upon 2.

the comforts of his life: So he deales with the soule, because he hath no power over the life of Faith, therefore he will execute his power to the utmost over the soule, that it may never come to have the comfortable sense of Faith; and no wonder, if when he brings his rammes to batter, the poore mud-wall of a Christian shakes, especially considering how smooth an Orator he is to perswade, and how subtill a Sophister he is to prove: Even as it is as easie with a good Logician to make a poore simple creature beleeve, so as he cannot deny rationally that the Sun doth not shine; so it is an easie thing with the Devill to perswade the soule, that it doth not rest and relie, when indeed it doth; especially if wee consider,

3. Thirdly, *What a misgiving nature and suspicious frame there is ordinarily in the hearts of Beleevers.* They are alwaies fearing and suspecting, lest they should not do their duty, they know that in many things all sin, and they are afraid lest they should cozen and deceive themselves; now when Satan takes a flint and a steele, and fals a striking, and he meets with such a box of ready-dry'd tinder, no wonder if he quickly strikes fire; Besides,

4. *A fourth cause may be melancholy, cloudy vapours, that for the present the soule is darkened with, and can see nothing with a cleare sight, but is like a man in a phrenzie.*

5. And a fifth cause may be, *a Christians wilfulnesse; when the Christian will take no evidence of his faith by the effects of it:* The best evidence that we either have, or can have of the truth of our faith, and of our justification is the effects of Faith; now if it comes to this, that the soule will not take any evidence of the truth of the act of Faith, but only under the Broad Seale of Heaven, the apprehension and assurance and full perswasion of it, the soule may live without comfort a great while, if with *Thomas* it must see the wounds and holes;

Here

Here's many a good ſoules condition; he queſtions the truth of his Faith; we come to him and tell him, could there be ſuch an hungring and thirſting after the Word, that thy eare is unſatisfied with hearing, unleſſe thou didſt beleeve this was the word of God, and reſt upon it as the Word of Truth? Could there be ſuch a care to pleaſe Chriſt, and a feare of offending him to be found in thy whole life and converſation, if thou didſt not rely upon him for ſalvation? Could there be ſuch a willingneſſe to part with all thy eſtate for Chriſt, and rather then thou wouldſt deny him or not enjoy him in his Ordinances, if thou didſt not rely upon God as thy portion? No, the ſoule will not look upon this as a ſufficient evidence; but cries out, All this an Hypocrite may do, ſanctification is imperfect, mine is Hypocriſie; No, would God ſeale it to me, then I would beleeve it. Now where this is found, the ſoule may for a long time ſit in darkneſſe, and ſee no light; yea, it may be, go down to the grave in its own thoughts, like *Eraſmus* hanging betwixt Heaven and Hell. But I proceed,

4. Fourthly, *Thou maiſt not at all times truſt with alike confidence, and yet at all times truly truſt.* The truth of truſt and affiance is one thing, the degrees of it another; the truth of Faith never growes more or leſſe, the degrees of Faith do; as the leaſt drop of water is water, ſo the leaſt dram of faith is faith, as much as the higheſt degree of it: This the experience of every Chriſtian will tell you; ſometimes they will ſay, I think if the Devill had hold of me I could truſt God for Heaven. *Though he kils me* (ſaith *Job*) *yet I will truſt in him*; that was not *Jobs* temper alwaies, and yet without queſtion *Job* did alwaies beleeve. *Paul* was not in the ſame temper *Rom.*7. that he was *Rom.* 8.38. *Peters* crying, *Maſter ſave me, or elſe I periſh*, did argue his faith was under water more than his head. *Davids* temper, *Pſal.* 27.1,2,3. was not the ſame with his temper, 1 *Sam.*27.1.

In

In the firſt he would not be afraid of an Hoſt encamping round about, no though the Hoſt conſiſted of ten thouſand, *Pſal.*3.6. But in that place, 1 *Sam.*27.1. tels us he was afraid of one *Saul*, and that after many experiences. So a poore Chriſtian is ready to think, O I do not truly truſt and rely upon God, *&c.* Sometimes I thinke if I had not a bit of bread, nor a drop of water, yet I would not feare, my faith ſhould be like that, *Hab.* 3. 17. Another time my heart is ſo far from it, that though I have for the preſent enough, yet my baſe heart can hardly keep from covetouſneſſe; ſometimes I thinke that if God would take mee away in a Maſſacre, I ſhould not yeeld my blood with a repining word; another time I ſo doubt of my intereſt in Chriſt, that I ſhould not know how to dye upon my bed, but am crying, Lord take me not away with the wicked. Chriſtian, thus thou maieſt be. *David*, *Pſal.*3. would not be afraid of his ſoules going out of his body, if ten thouſand ſwords were ready to cut out a paſſage for his ſoule out of his body. Another time hee cries, *O ſpare a little, give me ſpace, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go from hence, and be no more*; and againe, *Take me not away with the wicked.* One while *David* is troubled to ſee the wicked *flouriſh like a green Bay tree*; and himſelfe like a withered tree without a leafe; another time he is not troubled at it, but can as well truſt God when he ſends to *Nabal* for alms, as when he ſits at his Kingly table; and yet his faith was alwaies true. Faith may be interrupted, that the pulſe of it cannot alwaies beat alike, and yet while there is life the pulſe of faith beats, though by reaſon of ſome ſickneſs in the ſoule the pulſe may beat more faintly and deadly than at other times: Corruptions, though they are never wholly the Chriſtians Maſters, yet they may be their Maſters ſometimes more than others; the mind may be more clouded with earthly thoughts, the tide of paſſi-

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ons may be higher, and the stream of Lusts greater; the body may bee sometimes sick and lesse active, and yet living: So the soule may bee sicke, and Faith act more weakly then at other times, yet Faith may bee alive.

Fifthly, *Thou maiest not so fully and equally relie upon some promises as upon other, and yet truly relie upon all.* It is a truth, that the true Beleever closeth with every promise; but it is also true, that the best Beleever finds a great deale of difficulty more for his soule to close with and relie upon some particular promises then upon others; and a Beleever shall find, if hee be put to it, that it is harder to relie upon God for his promises for this life, then for his promises for eternall life; God hath made promises for this life, Earth is made over by Indenture to the Saints as well as Heaven, *Mat.* 6. 32. God hath made promises of protection in times of danger, of sufficiency in time of penury; now a Christian will find it harder, if hee be put to it for want of bread, to relie upon Gods feeding promises, then upon his promises for eternall life: O it is hard for a poor creature to trust God for bread and water. Hence comes distrusting and distracting care, hence covetousnesse and earthly mindednesse in Gods owne people. And if a Christian be surrounded with swords, and be in the midst of dangers, it is a hard thing now confidently and without fear to relie upon Gods shield and buckler, and trust himself within the Castle of his providence. I am confident when *David* manifested such an evident distrust of Gods promise for protection of him. 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. he did not at all distrust God for saving of him; wee read not a word of such a distrust: Now I conceive the reason of it may be two-fold: 5.

First, *Because here the flesh is sensible and concerned in it.* Dangers are obvious to sense; The eie sees swords and trembles, it sees present dangers; but it sees 1.

that a Christian may truly rest upon the promises for salvation, and pardon of his sinnes, though hee doth not so easily rest, nor so constantly, nor fully relie upon him for some particular promises of temporall mercies.

The sixth is this, *Thou maiest hang tremblingly upon the promises, and yet hang upon them truly.* And there is a seventh, Thou maiest truly relie, and dwell upon the promises, and yet not truly appropriate and peculiarize them, and dwell on them as thy own portion, to thy apprehension; but of these afterwards.

SERM.

SERM. XI.

MAR. 9. 24.

Lord I beleeve, helpe my unbeleefe:

I Am come now to a ſixth propoſition, which is this, *A Chriſtian may relie and hang tremblingly upon the promiſes, and yet depend truly*; a trembling faith is no contradiction, faith breeds joy; and hence is that of the Apoſtle, *The rejoycing of your faith*, but *David* hath bidden us, *Rejoyce with trembling.* I have read a ſpeech of S. *Auſtine*, that *ſuch as was the degree of ſollicitous fear, ſuch was the degree of grounded aſſurance.* It hath been obſerved, that ſuch men as have had the palſie in their heads, have lived to be aged men. A Chriſtian I am ſure, may be a true Chriſtian, though the trembling palſie of fear be in him. It is the Apoſtles counſel, *Phil.* 2. 12. *Work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling*: Sure I am, the worke of faith muſt bee done in working out 6.

our salvation, and this must be done with trembling. It is a false and presumptuous tenet that is by some maintained in these times, that will banish all fear and trembling from faith, as utterly inconsistent with faith, and will deny any to have faith but such as have got a confident presumption, as if palsied hands were no hands; Christ was never so cruell to poor distressed soules as these are; *Ephraim exalted himselfe by speaking trembling*, *Hos.* 13. 1. The woman *feared and trembled*, *Mar.* 5. 33. yet Christ told her that her *faith had made her whole*. *Paul* trembling said, what wilt thou have me to doe? *Acts* 9. 6. And yet I think none in their right wits will deny that the seeds of faith were growing in *Pauls* heart, though the stalk shaked. The poor drowning man that catcheth hold of some twig to save his life, he knowes hee is drowned unlesse he doth it, hee therefore hangs truly, and even casts his whole weight upon it, and yet without question his heart trembles for feare, though he cannot but thinke the bough will beare him: such is the Beleever; the true Beleever is a poor wretch, that seeing himselfe undone, in a woefull condition, sinking to hell, even just sinking, only spies a branch of the root of *Jesse*, the Lord Jesus Christ in a promise; upon this he claps hold; here, saies hee, I will hang; if this promise will bear the weight of a broken undone soule, then I am saved; if not, I perish; then the soul considers what burthen it hath to lay upon it, & remembers it is the heavyest weight of all its originall and actuall sinnes, this makes it tremble and fear; I doubt not but *Esther* when she went in to K. *Ahashuerosh* had very good hopes that she should prevaile, & did depend upon that as the last twig of hope she and her people had; yet she went in trembling, and said, *If I perish, I perish*; Now there may bee severall causes alledged for this trembling.

1. First, *It may bee the deep apprehension of misery that did*

did precede; possibly the poor soule was under a spirit of bondage a long time, and shaked in pieces almost with horrour and fear; at last God opens a key-hole of mercy, and bids the soule look through and see a Christ pardoning all its sinnes, and washing it with his precious blood, and cancelling all its debts, and wiping away its teares; the soule at the just opening of this now stands and trembles, fearing lest the newes should not be true, and terrified with those late apprehensions, not conceiving that Hell can bee so soon transformed into Heaven. When *Peter* had been in the Goale and the Prison, and without question full of carnall feares; for the next day he was to have been brought out and have been slaine, and the Lord just in the nick of time sent his Angel and delivered him, *Act.* 12. 9. *Peter* could not tell what to think of it, hee wist not that was true that was done by the Angel, but thought that hee had seen a vision, he was fain to stay a while before he came to himselfe, and said, *Now I know of a surety, that God hath sent his Angel to bring me out*: So it is with many a poor Beleever, he is in Goale too, God hath him in Goale, and the spirit of bondage keeps him in fetters; and to his thinking there is scarce a minute somtimes betwixt him and death: Alas! death were a mercy, but he thinks that there is not an haires breadth betwixt him and hell; when he lies down at night, he wonders that hee doth not awake in hell in the morning; now when under the saddest and deepest apprehensions the soule hath of eternall sinking into hell, God beyond all his expectations sends his Angel to knocke off these fetters, and bring it into the glorious liberty of the Sonnes of God, when the soule, like *Peter*, is sleeping betwixt two devils, as it thinks, and is bound with two hellish chaines of terrour and feare, and the spirit of bondage keeps the prison, and the Angel of the Lords consolation comes upon the soule, and the light, the glimmering glo-

v. 11.

glorious light of mercy and conſolation ſhineth into this darke, helliſh priſon, and ſmites the ſoule, and raiſeth it up, and ſaies, Soule, ariſe, thou art delivered, and makes the chaines fall off from the ſoul, and ſaies to the ſoule, Poor ſoule, gird up thy ſelfe, bind on thy ſandals, come ſtand up from the dead, Chriſt ſhall give thee light: Come, come out of this Hell, caſt thy garments about thee &c. No wonder if the ſoule for a while, like *Peter*, will not that this is true which is done, and no wonder if it ſtep a ſtep or two further before its trembling be over, eſpecially conſidering that theſe terrours ſeldome are at once, but by degrees abated from the ſoule; it paſſeth, like *Peter*, through the firſt and ſecond ward, through one iron gate of feares, and then another ſtreet of terrours; I ſay, conſidering this, it is no great wonder if it be ſome while before the ſoule ſaies, with *Peter*, *Now I know of a ſurety, now I know of a ſurety, that the Lord hath ſent his Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of the Devil, and from all the expectations of Satan:* It is an ordinary thing if a man hath been drowning, and almoſt drowned, pull'd on to the land, hee trembles and quakes at firſt, as if ſtill hee were in his drowning danger, though hee bee on the ſhore; the terrors which had ſurprized him before, are not preſently ſhaken off.

2. A ſecond cauſe may be *in regard of ſome holds that have already failed the ſoule*; Faith is, when the ſoule laies hold upon Jeſus Chriſt, as the twig of ſalvation, and hangs upon him for life, and heaven, and happineſs; Now the ſoule hath had many twigs failed: It is the nature of man to be timerous, and as a drowning man will catch hold upon any thing which comes next hand to ſave his life on; if hee catcheth hold on one, and that breaks, he claps hold on another: if that againe breaks, he claps hold on a third; if that alſo breakes, he ſtil claps hold on a fourth, beleeving it will hold; otherwiſe he would

would never lay hold upon it; yet so many having failed, he cannot but feare lest that should faile him too: So it is with a poor soule, sinne hath almost drowned him in terrour: first he claps hold upon morality and civility, resolving to live a sober, and honest, and vertuous life, and thinkes this will beare him; well this twig breakes, and will not hold; when God hath a mind to work his work upon the soule, hee quickly shewes the soule that this is a bruised reed, and broken staffe, the soule is plunged into a depth of horror and terror againe; well, then he claps hold of another twig, and that is his duties, he prayes and fasts, and here he hangs, this shall save me (saith hee;) this twig also breaks, the Lord shewes the poor wretch that all its righteousnesse is as a menstruous cloth, and as filthy rags in his sight, and here the soule is againe plunged in feare; at last God shewes the soule the bough of Jesus Christs Righteousnesse; the drowning, sinking, poore creature laies hold of this but with trembling, lest this should also faile; at first it feares.

A third cause may be *in regard of the promise*; Faiths worke is to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, but now the soule doth not this immediately; but mediately. Christ doth not appear and speak out of heaven to the soule, and say, I am thy salvation, then the work of Faith would be more easie; but Christ hath given the soule many both sweet and precious promises, and these are the cords that the Lord Jesus Christ throwes out to the soule to pull it to the land with: Now the soule takes this but with trembling until it hath tryed the strength of them, in regard it conceives the promises are lyable to many ambiguities, bounded with many conditions and limitations, and the soule conceives it selfe either not within the bounds of the promise, or unable to fulfill the conditions of the promise, or that it may make a false application of the promise: And 3.

hence it is, that some to a poore drooping soule, that feares its condition, and hath a true, though a trembling hand of faith (for Faith may have the palsey) and urge the faithfulnesse of God in promising, the sureness of the promise once made, the unchangeable nature of God; they will tell you, they do not a jot question this, they know *God is not man that he should lye; nor yet as the son of man that he should repent*; they know that he is both faithfull and true, but the promises they feare are not made to them; they indeed rest upon them, but whether rightly or no, God knows; they conceive that either the promises were made to particular persons, as to the Nation of the Jews, or they are sure to the particular number of Gods Elect, of which they are none, *&c.* they will tell you that indeed the promises are true, but they are conditionall, and they feare that the conditions of the promise are not fulfilled in their soules; so that the worke lies another way, not so much to perswade them of the truth of the promises in generall, the cause of their trembling lies not here for feare that the promise should faile those to whom it belongs, but for fear that they should misapply and misunderstand the faithfull and true promises of God: And now although we must say concerning this trembling, *this is also our infirmity*, yet none can deny that it is an hereditary disease to the nature of man, and will be in us more or lesse, so long as any of us be in the flesh, and so long as sin remaines in our flesh, and will be especially and most in those that have lien under greatest feares and terrours, and are newly got out of them, and begin to have a little of the light of comfort glimmer upon them; even as a man that should come out of an horrid and darke dungeon where he hath been in darknesse, thick darknesse, into the glaring sight of the Sun in the top of the Meridian, at the first will bee dazled, and rub his eyes, and apprehend himselfe in some darknesse,

neſſe, though he be in the light. He that had his eyes opened, *Joh 9.* firſt thought he ſaw men like trees; and this trembling may conſiſt with true dependance. *Iob 13.15. Though he kill me, yet I will truſt in him*; the laſt words, *yet I will truſt in him*, argued faith, and a ſtrong faith; faith that he would truſt; a ſtrong faith, that yet he would truſt; and yet whoſo conſidereth the firſt words, that *Job* apprehended himſelf in a danger of killing, will eaſily thinke that it was a trembling faith that *Job* there acted. And as it is ordinary with poore Chriſtians through their infirmity to beleeve tremblingly in the beginning of their converſion; ſo there is alſo another time when trembling doth ordinarily accompany true faith in the people of God, and that is a time of deſertion.

2. In time of deſertion I thinke none will deny but Gods children have, & act, and muſt act true faith in this ſaving and juſtifying act of reliance and dependency; but I am ſure this they cannot do without trembling: Such was the condition of *Job* in that place I before mentioned, *Job* 13.15. *David* did rely, and ſtrongly rely in his time of deſertion, inſomuch that in his 6. *Pſalme*, v. 8. he ſpeakes confidently of a thing that he beleeved for, as if it were already done, *The Lord hath heard the voyce of my weeping*; and yet whoſoever readeth but the former part of that *Pſalme*, will find that he was in a trembling temper, His ſoule was ſore vexed, his bones were troubled, hee was weary with his groaning, and hee made his bed to ſwim with his teares, &c. Now the cauſe of this trembling ariſeth; 2.

Firſt, *From the ſenſe of the ſinne*; The ſinner ſaith, *Ah! the promiſes did belong to me; but I have been a back-ſlider, and now what have I to do with the promiſes? What hath ſuch a wretch as I to do with theſe filthy uncleane hands of mine to lay hold upon a cleane Chriſt?* The ſenſe of ſin ſtrikes a deep impreſſion upon the ſoule, and puts 1.

a ſhaking into the heart of the ſoule; yet it laies hold; if Chriſt will not ſave me (ſaith the poore ſoule) ſure I am nothing elſe can; to him I will go, and me thinkes it goes as the Meſſengers of *Benhadad* to *Ahab*, 1 *King.* 20. *Benhadad* there had wrong'd *Ahab*, and through the help of God his Army was routed, and *Benhadad* was glad to hide himſelfe in one of *Ahabs* Townes in an inner Chamber, and ſends to *Ahab*; his ſervants, *ver.* 31. ſaid to him, *We have heard that the Kings of the houſe of Iſrael are mercifull Kings, let us put ſackcloth on our loynes, and put ropes about our heads, and go out to the King of Iſrael; peradventure he will ſave thy life*; ſo they did, and ſaid, *Thy ſervant Benhadad ſaies, I pray thee let me live; And he ſaid, is he yet alive? he is my brother*; the men catcht his words, and they ſaid, *Thy brother Benhadad*; and he ſaid, *Go and bring him*; and accordingly he came, and *Ahab* tooke him up into his Charriot: So it is with the poore ſoule, when the ſoule hath fought againſt God by ſin, the Lord overthrowes it by deſertion, yet it lives, but dare not be ſeen ſo openly, it is hidden under the darke cloud of deſertion, it ſquilks as in an inner Chamber, it is ſenſible how it hath deſerved death, yea ten thouſand deaths; But the life of grace being yet in the ſoule, it ſaies within it ſelfe, I have heard that the King of Heaven, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is a mercifull Chriſt; come therefore, I will ſend my Meſſengers of Faith and Prayer, they ſhall put ſackcloth upon their loynes, and ropes upon their heads, and go out to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; peradventure he will ſave my ſoule, and I ſhall live. Without queſtion *Benhadads* ſervants went with trembling hearts, and yet relied upon this as the only means to ſave *Benhadad* their Maſter alive: So the ſoule ſends out at ſuch a time a trembling Faith, and trembling Prayers, and yet truly relies upon Chriſts mercy and favour, and the ſoule ſaies to God; *Lord! thy backeſliding, revolting ſervant ſaies, Let me*

live,

live, let my backeſlidings be healed, let my renewed ſins be yet pardoned: Chriſt will ſay, *Thou art my brother,* and take thee into the Charriot; but yet thy faith trembles, and thy prayer trembles: and indeed there is very great reaſon for it, if we ſecondly conſider, *that the very eſſence of deſertions is Gods withdrawing of his manifeſtative love from the ſoule, that the ſoule, though it be loved with Gods elective love in, and under deſertions, yet it wants the apprehenſions and manifeſtations of his love:* Now, that which only can keep the ſoule from its naturall temper of trembling, is the apprehended manifeſtations of Chriſts love to it, which being withdrawn, the ſoule fals a trembling againe, and yet the life of grace being not extinct, it ſtill truſts, yea though he kils the ſoule, yet it truſts in him. So I have done with the ſixth Propoſition, That the ſoule may depend tremblingly upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and yet depend truly.

I come now to the ſeventh and laſt Propoſition, to ſhew what weakneſſe and doubting may conſiſt with true faith in the ſoule: that I ſhall do in a ſeventh propoſition thus, *Thou mayeſt truly rely and depend upon the promiſes of God, and upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for everlaſting ſalvation, and dwell upon them, and yet not be able fully and truly to appropriate and peculiarize all the promiſes to thy ſelfe, and act accordingly to them at all times.* There are *diſtinctions of promiſes,* and *diſtinctions of times,* from whence will ariſe diſtinctions of cauſes, which would be underſtood, to make out this certaine truth. 7.

1. *You muſt know that there is a diſtinction of promiſes;* the promiſes are many waies diſtinguiſhed; there are *generall* and *particular promiſes, abſolute* and *conditionall promiſes.* Promiſes that *concerne ſome particular people,* as the people of the Jews, and *particular perſons,* as to *David* and *Hezekiah,* and other of the people of God, which if we ſhould apply, we ſhould miſapply to

our selves: I shall not meddle with all distinctions of these promises, but only with what shall conduce now to my purpose to make out this truth I have laid downe in my proposition, and so I shall distinguish of promises, two waies:

First, *They are temporall or spirituall.*

Secondly, *They are absolute or conditionall.*

1. First, *There are temporall promises*, which are or may be called temporall, *either in respect of the matter of the promise, or circumstance of time limited in the promise.* There are some promises that were made for a certaine time, and at the time expired were paid, and now the bonds are cancell'd, these were particular: Such were many promises made to the people of the Jews, and to particular persons amongst them; *Now these we must not look to peculiarize*, and appropriate to our selves, they are done with.

2. Secondly, *There are temporall promises, so called in respect of the things promised*, being things temporall for the body or estate, for protection of our selves, wives, estates, families: Now for these promises, *thou mayest not peculiarize them, and yet have true faith for salvation; salvation and heaven being not the thing promised in them*; and besides, there may be cause why thou mayest not have so good ground to rely, and confidently rest upon God for the fulfilling of these promises, as I shall shew you more when I come to handle the distinction of times, and as I shewed you the last time, in the case of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. But secondly, there is a second distinction of promises, I meane of *spirituall promises*, which it is our duty at all times to apply and rest upon; yet these are either *absolute* or *conditionall*: It is a note that I have before somewhere noted, that the promises of Gods first mercies in a way of saving grace to the soule are ordinarily absolute: *I will give, and I will give*, without any previous conditions to bee found in the soule,

soule, as his promises of *inlightning grace*; Jer. 24. v. 7. *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God*: And for the grace of humiliation, *Ezek.* 36.26. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put upon you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh*; and so *for his grace by which he convinceth*, Joh. 16.8. *The Spirit should convince the world of sin, of righteousnesse, and of judgement*: Now these promises are altogether absolute, being the free promises for dispensations of the first graces in order to a poore soules salvation: Now there are other promises of God for spirituall mercies in order to the soules salvation, which are second dispensations, and these are propounded with conditions, as the promises of heaven for power to rely on Jesus Christ, peace, assurance, &c. *Isa* 55.1. *Mat.* 11.29. and againe, *To him that overcommeth will I give to drinke of the water of life freely*, with many such more; not as if man could fulfill these conditions in the soule, and prepare his own heart; No, we abhor that Popish Doctrine, though some falsly charge us with it: But because Christ will fulfill them, before he bestowes those higher degrees of mercy and favour upon them; he will make the soule hunger and thirst before he will let it know it shall live, and give it power to come unto him; he will make the soule weary and heavy laden with sin, before he will give the soule power to rely upon him comfortably for salvation: *He will take away the heart of stone out of the soule, and give it an heart of flesh*, before he will give it power *to walk in his statutes, and keep his ordinances, and do them*, before he will let it know that he is its God, and that it is Gods chosen vessell. And thus I have shewed you the distinction of promises; and what we shall conclude from hence for our purpose, I will shew you by and by when I have done with the distinction of times, which I come to.

Isa. 55.1. Mat. 11.9.

Ezek. 11.19.

The-

2 Distinct. *The Soule hath its Winter and Summer*, its cloudy and black daies, and its lightsome and glaring daies.

First, It hath its lightsome, Summer Sun-shine daies, when it is not conscious

1. 1. *Of any great sin committed against knowledge*, such as *Tertullian* cals *Peccata devorantia salutem*; Sins that swallow up heaven and salvation in the soule.

2. 2. *When it hath no naturall distempers of body*, no cloudy, melancholy vapours; for the soule being to act through the body, doth something suffer by it: and as it is with a man that looks at the reflection of his face in a glasse, if there be a wetnesse or dust upon the glasse, he cannot see clearely: So the soule, if there be a mist or dust of melancholly oppresses the body, the soule cannot see and act clearly.

3. Or 3. *When the body is not under some harsh affliction*; for the soule sympathizeth with the body, and in its acting through the Organs of it, shews the affection that it hath with the bodies sufferings; and so also there are black and dark daies; for as it is Summer time with the soule, and day-light, when it is not sad and darkned with desertion, and when the body is not oppressed with melancholly, or affliction, or persecution; So on the contrary, it is Winter, and a darke time with the soule, when the soule hath sinned some great sin, for which the soule looks up trembling to God, and looks upon him as an angry revengefull God, or when the body is heavy and oppressed with melancholly vapours stopping the passages of the soule, or under heavy and grievous affliction, that it is borne down even to a back-breaking under them; even as it is with a fountaine that runs through Conduit-pipes of lead, *&c.* or wood, into any house, if the fountaine be dirty, and muddy in it selfe, dirty water comes into the house; or if the Conduit-pipes through which it passeth be dirty and tainted, the water bringeth the pollution and tang of bitternesse, *&c.* that was in the

the pipe into the house; otherwise, if both the fountaine be cleare and sweet, and the Conduit-pipes be not stopped, nor tainted, nor dirty, then the water runs sweetly into the place to which the Pipes lead it: So it is with the soule that is the fountaine that runs into acts, but through the Conduit-pipes of the body; if the pipes be stopt, or oppressed, or muddy, or cleare, such is the actings of the soule. And thus I have shewed you the distinctions both of times and promises; now I shall conclude the truth of this proposition in some foure or five Conclusions.

First of all, *Particular promises must not be expected to be peculiarized*; we may not expect that those promises which were made to the people of the Jews in particular, should be made good to us, because they had promises to be delivered out of *Babylon* and *Egypt* at such a prefixt time; it were madnesse in us to beleeve that the Church of God should be now delivered just after 70. yeares, or 400. yeares; and so likewise what promises were made to any particular persons amongst the Jews, as for any now to apply that promise made to *Hezekiah*, I will adde to thy life 15 years: I think we have a rule here in Law, *That if an inheritance be intailed by name, it cannot be translated to any other*; these promises were intailed by name; these thou canst not, nay oughtst not to apply, they are not a portion by thy Father designed for thee. 1.

Secondly, *It may possibly be, that in some times thou mayest not be able to appropriate the temporall promises that God hath made to his children, amongst which thou art included.*

1. *In the darke time of want and penury to beleeve for bread to eate, when I see none like to come; Or in hard feeding upon Scripture leaves*: I showed you this the last day; 'tis nothing to do it, or at least to think we do it in times of prosperity. *Habakkuks* faith, *Hab.* 3. 17.

was an hard faith, though it were a strong and precious one.

2. *In the darke time of desertions*, It is hard, as I shall shew you by and by, to apply those promises that are of neerest concernment to our salvation, much more those which are at so remote a distance.

3. *In a time when melancholly, dark, cloudy vapours of the body cast a mist before the soules eye*, and will not give it leave to act clearly.

4. *In a time when the soule hath sinned thou mayest not fully rely and be so confident, as before.*

To peculiarize these promises, I shewed you the ground of this before, because though God hath promised that his Saints shall never eternally fall out of his favour, yet he hath and will punish his Saints for sin, with the substraction of temporall favours, as I shewed you before in the case of *David*; and I take that to be an old Antinomian errour, instead of a new truth, *That God doth not with temporall afflictions correctively punish his best servants for sin.*

3. *It doth not argue a nullity of faith, and true saving faith, at any time not to be able to appropriate outward temporall promises*; for although it is our duty to rely and depend upon all the promises, yet if we through infirmity be not able to rely upon these, I conceive it doth not null the verity of our faith, salvation being not the thing promised in these.

Thirdly, *For those that are conditionall promises in darke times, the soule may not be able clearely and fully to apply them, rest upon them, and particularly apply them, and yet at the same time truly dwell and rest upon them.* What spirituall promises are made conditionally in Scripture, I have shewed you before; now it may possibly be, that even these, though of great concernment to the soule, yet at all times the soul may not be able to say, this promise of Heaven and glory and happinesse be-

longs

longs to me. Holy *Asaph* in a dark day with his soule, may say *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy cleane gone for ever? Doth his promise faile for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* Psa.77 7,8,9. The reason lies not, that the soule doubts of the truth of God in his promises at all; no, it verily thinketh, that if it had fulfilled the conditions of the promises, the promises would remain to its soule as stedfast as Mount *Sion*; but it cannot see *that*: It looks upon its sins in a multiplying glass, and upon its repentance in a diminishing glass. Every mountaine of good in it selfe now seemes a Mole-hill, and every Mole-hill of sins seemeth a Mountaine unto it: Thence it is that in the soules dark day of afflictions in the soule, or in a dark day of afflictions to the body, the soules faith is weakned, it is ready to looke upon its great affliction as an evidence that it wanteth that interest in God which it should have to apply promises: It saies with *Gideon, Judg.6.13.* when the promise saith like the Angel, *The Lord is with thee*; it answers, *O my Lord if the Lord be with me, why then is all this befalne me?* and where be all his mercies? No, the Lord hath forsaken me, & delivered me to the hand of Satan: now the soule must not take a judgement of its faith from hence, but appeale *ab anima perturbata ad animam quietam*, to a calm day in the soule againe.

Lastly, *In dark times the truly beleeving soule (though it can give no reason for it) may not be able to rest and apply the most absolute peculiar promises as its peculiar portion*; This I shall fully make out, by considering what is requisite to be in the soule that shall appropriate any promise to it selfe as its portion, upon which it will live, in which, and upon which it will dwell.

SERM. XII.

MAR. 9. 24.

Lord I beleeve, help thou my unbeleefe.

I Am ſtill treating concerning thoſe doubts and weakneſſes, which may and often do conſiſt with true ſaving faith in a gracious ſoule. My laſt Propoſition I left imperfect; it was (as you may remember) this, That a gracious ſoule may truly rely upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and upon his promiſes for eternall life, and yet not be able at all times fully and truly to appropriate and peculiarize all the promiſes to its ſelfe: This I ſhewed in foure Propoſitions, premiſing firſt a diſtinction of promiſes, and ſecondly a diſtinction of times; my laſt Propoſition was this, *That in darke times a truly gracious ſoule may not be able to reſt upon and apply the moſt abſolute free promiſes for ſalvation, ſo far as to ſay, Theſe promiſes are my portion.*

To

To make out this, I told you I would ſhew you what things are requiſite to be in the ſoule, that ſhall appropriate any promiſe to it ſelfe, as its particular portion, which is the worke at which I then ſtopt, and which I have now to take up; for here is the buſines with troubled ſpirits; tell them of large, abſolute, free promiſes, as (ſay they) here are jewels in boxes, but theſe belong not to us, they are not our portion; and from hence further they conclude, that they have not any true faith, becauſe they have not for the preſent a particular full power to apply theſe promiſes as plaiſters to their wounded ſoules, and reſt upon them; but yet I ſhall ſhew you the want of this doth not null our faith, and is not alwaies a negation of it.

I conceive there are three things that are requiſite to be found in the ſoule that ſhall be able to apply any particular promiſe to it ſelfe as its portion.

1. *A cleare underſtanding of the Promiſe.*
2. *A cleare underſtanding of its own condition.*
3. *A mighty and particular working of the Spirit of God upon the ſoule*, inabling the ſoule to make ſuch particular application.

First, *There muſt be a cleare underſtanding of the Promiſe*; the promiſe muſt appeare to the ſoule as a ſalve having a full efficacy and vertue in it for the healing of its ſore, otherwiſe the ſoule can never apply it; now it may poſſibly be, that thy non-application of the promiſe may proceed from thy not underſtanding the vertue, or miſunderſtanding the intent, and end, and power, and efficacy of the promiſe; poſſibly thou mayeſt underſtand the promiſe to be made particular, when it is propounded generall; and ſuch have I my ſelfe ſometimes met with, that being under afflictions of ſpirit, when I have propounded a promiſe to them, as a ſalve fit for their ſore, they have evaded that way; *Ah! but that promiſe was made to the Jews, or to ſuch, or to ſuch a par-* 1.

ticular person; it was a plaister spread for another's wound, and what have I to do to lay hold on it? Or it was not made for such a sinner as I am; not for a backslider, not for such an hard-hearted wretch as I am, &c. and with such cavils have stood at a distance from the promise, crying, It is not meet that the childrens bread should be given to dogs; or perhaps their non-application may proceed from a misunderstanding of the matter of the promises. Now for this thou must cleare up thy understanding in the nature of the promise, *both in respect of the persons* to whom it is made, and in respect *of the matter of the promise*; and for the more cleare and full understanding of the promise. I shall give you a rule or two: The first is remarkable, I find it in a reverend Author, which I shall deliver in his words with a little limitation, thus, *Generall promises for spirituall mercies are alwaies to be applyed particularly, and particular promises for spirituall and temporall mercies are to be applyed generally*; I call those generall promises which are either *made to Gods people in generall*, or concerning *spirituall things in generall*; as for example, God had made a generall promise to any that should pray toward his Temple, 1 *King.*8.37,40. *Jehoshaphat* being after in distresse, applyed this generall promise to his own particular condition, 1 *Chron.*20.8,10. And without question it was from a particular faith in this generall promise, that *Daniel* prayed with his windows open towards *Hierusalem*, *Dan.*6.10. and so for those promises which are made to the people of God for spirituall mercies in generall, such is that promise, *Psal.*84.11. *He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that live uprightly*, ought to be applyed for any spirituall good thing, or particular dispensation of grace. So the Apostle, *Jam.* 1.12. would have the twelve Tribes under temptations apply those generall promises of a crowne of life made unto Gods people that endure any

1.

1 King.8 37, 40.

1 Chr.20.8,10.

Dan.6.10.

Psa.84.11.

Jam.1.12.

any afflictions, to their particular ſufferings in their afflictions, and under their particular temptations. And *for thoſe promiſes that are particular, they are alſo to be generally applyed*; as for that particular promiſe made to *Moſes*, *Exod.*4.*v.*12. I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou ſhalt ſay; it cannot be literally applyed to every Chriſtian, particularly that at all times God will be with him in going in to *Pharaoh*, and teach him what to ſay (for he is not call'd to go in) but thus, it may and ought to be applyed by any particular Chriſtian, That when God cals him to a publike ſervice, and he finds a warrantable calling, and an inability, hee may by faith particularly rely upon that promiſe, though not by a particular application, for aſſiſtance, juſt at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a manner as the promiſe was made good to *Moſes*; yet in generall for ſome kind of aſſiſtance in the undergoing of his works; and ſuch a generall application Chriſt warrants every particular Apoſtle to make of that promiſe, as you may ſee, *Mark.*13.*v.*11. And ſo for that particular promiſe which was made to *Jacob* going to *Padan-Aram*, *Gen.*28.15. *Behold* (ſaith God) *I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither ſoever thou goeſt*, &c. A Chriſtian cannot now particularly apply this ſo as to reſolve upon going to *Padan-Aram*, leaning on the ſtaffe of this promiſe: But as there is no warrant for ſuch a particular application, ſo neither ought this to bee rejected as a promiſe of no concernment to a Chriſtian, but to be generally applyed; and thus far every particular Chriſtian may apply this, *viz.* when he is called to take an hazardous and dangerous journey, he may apply this promiſe for Gods protection of him in it; and this Chriſt warranted to us. *Joh.*15.11, 20. Praying that God in keeping up their faith, would fulfill that Promiſe which he had made to *Peter*, *Luke* 22.32. Luk.22.32.

This is one Rule which will help thee to underſtand the

the full extent and vertue of the promiſes, and this you ſee will eaſily divide it ſelfe into theſe particular branches.

1. *That thoſe promiſes which for ſpiritual mercies God hath made to his people in generall, have ſuch vertue in them, that we may in times of need particularly apply them to our ſoules.* As for example, that promiſe, *Hoſea* 14.4. *I will heale their back-ſlidings, and love them freely*: It was made to the people of God in generall: Now a Chriſtian that hath been a backſlider, may reſt upon this as his proper and peculiar portion: And ſo for other.

2. *That thoſe promiſes which are made for grace and ſpirituall good things in generall, may and ought to be particularly applyed to our ſoules for any ſpeciall good thing, or any particular diſpenſation of grace which our ſouls want:* As ſuppoſe I want faith, and I am to pray for it; praying is but ſuing a Bond; where ſhall I have a promiſe to ground my prayer for this diſpenſation of Grace, poſſibly I cannot find out, or call to mind any particular promiſe, for that diſpenſation of grace, yet I may apply that promiſe, *Pſal.* 84.11. or *Zach.* 12.10. where God hath made a promiſe of all grace to his people, if he hath promiſed to give all, then will he give that.

3. *That thoſe promiſes which are made to particular perſons, and for particular occaſions, or for particular mercies, though I cannot particularly apply them in that latitude, and with thoſe particular circumſtances with which they were made to them, yet I may apply the ſubſtance of them generally, to my ſelfe in particular, and ſo far they have particular vertue for me:* As ſuppoſe that I be haled to priſon, and be to be called before Magiſtrates, and be afraid I ſhall not be able to carry my ſelfe ſo as to credit the cauſe of God; and I cannot remember any promiſe made to the people of God in that condition; I may ſo far apply that promiſe which was particularly made

made to *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, and *Andrew*, *Mar.* 13.3,11. as to rely upon God, either to keep me from appearing before them, or to be with me when I am before them, *&c.* If I be to take a long journey, and for the preſent poſſibly cannot find a promiſe in generall of Gods protection to his people, I may rely upon that particular promiſe made to *Jacob*, *Gen.*28.15. thus far that God will ſome way or other protect me, and provide for me, *&c.*

A ſecond Rule is this, *Whatſoever promiſes thou findeſt in the Word of God made to any particular people, for ſpirituall and ſoule-mercies, thou mayeſt apply to the ſtill continuing Church, and any member thereof*; thoſe promiſes which were made to the Jews, are good to Gentiles; thoſe which were made to them and their ſeed for generall and ſpirituall mercies, are good to us and our ſeed: This the Apoſtle evidently makes good, *Act.*2.39. where *Peter* ſpeaking concerning the Promiſe of Salvation, ſaies, *The Promiſe is unto you and unto you children, and unto thoſe that are afar off*, [That is, the Gentiles] *even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call*; and the Apoſtle urgeth this in ſeverall places; hee ſpeaks of the *Corinthians*, as having, and being poſſeſſed of the Promiſes, 2 *Cor.*7.1. and *Peter* writing to ſcattered ſtrangers, ſaith, 2 *Pet.*1.4. *To us are given many great and precious promiſes.* 2.

1. And this thou mayeſt be ſure of, if thou doſt but conſider,

1. *That that God that hath promiſed is an immutable God*, he is the ſame God to all the faithfull, with him there is no ſhadow of change.

2. If thou doſt but conſider, *That the promiſes made to the Jews, were not made to them under the notion of Jews, but under the notion of Beleevers, as they were the faithfull people of God.* Indeed the promiſes in *Geneſis* are many made to *Abraham*, and his children, and ſeed;

But (as you have lately heard by my reverend Brother in another place, upon another ſubject) *Abraham* had a *ſtarry ſeed*, and a *duſty ſeed*, according to Gods two-fold promiſe, *I will make thy ſeed as the duſt of the earth*; and again, *I will make them as the ſtars of heaven*: Now the promiſe is not made to *Abrahams duſty ſeed*, to the bare children of *Abraham* according to the fleſh, but to the *ſtarry ſeed*, to all the faithfull: This was all the Jews brag: O I we are the children of *Abraham*, to us belong the Law and the Promiſes, and the Priviledges, *&c.* But our Saviour Chriſt decideth this queſtion, *Joh* 8.39. *If ye were Abrahams children, you would do the works of Abraham*; that is, if you were the children of *Abraham* according to the faith (his ſtarry children;) thoſe Beleevers that do the works of *Abraham*, and beleeve with the faith of *Abraham*, they are the ſeed of *Abraham*, to whom the promiſe is made; *Gal.*3.29. *And if yee bee Chriſts* [that is, ſuch as by faith are united to Chriſt] *then are ye Abrahams ſeed, and heires according to the Promiſe.*

3. And this will be further evident, if you conſider in the third place, *That the whole Covenant, of which every promiſe is but a branch or member, was made originally and primarily with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for all beleevers, Gal.*3 9. *Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt.* Gal.3,16. *Beza* and *Piſcator*, and many other Expoſitors would have that place underſtood, not of Chriſt perſonall, but of Chriſt myſticall, as if it had not been to be underſtood, that the promiſe was made betwixt God the Father and the perſon of Chriſt, but with the Church, which is the myſticall Body of Chriſt: But learned Mr *Rutherford* diſproves that Expoſition, and proves that the promiſe was indeed made with the *Perſon* of Chriſt from the 17. *v*, for it was made with that Chriſt,

1. *In whom the Covenant was confirmed.*

2. *In*

2. *In whom the Nations were blessed.*

3. *In whom we receive the Promise through faith,* verse 14.

4. *With that Christ that was made a Curse for us,* verse 13.

Which must needs be understood of a personall, not a mysticall Christ; and it is plaine (saith he) from *Heb.* 1.5. compared with *Psalm.* 89.26. *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.* And secondly, *The Covenant made to the Fathers, and David and his seed, is fulfilled to Christ and his seed, Act.* 13.32,33. And thirdly, *he was the second Adam. Now as the Covenant of workes was made with the first Adam for him and his seed, and he was the publike covenanting person for all his posterity; So Christ was the second Adam, and the Covenant was made with him for all those that should be his seed,* 1 *Cor.* 15.22. And fourthly, *All that is required in a Covenant, we find betwixt God and Christ; God demanded he should lay down his life, and for it he promiseth that he should see his seed, and God should give him many children,* Is. 53.10. *Christ consenteth to come and lay down his life, and do his Fathers will,* Heb. 10.7. Joh. 20.8. So that whatsoever promises were made for spiritual and eternall mercies to the Jewish Church, or any members of it, are still applicable to the Church and Children of God under the New Testament; for the Promises were not made to them as Jews, but as Christians, (though not known under that name, which was first given to them at *Antioch*) that is, such as were heires of Christ, and children of Christ; for the Promise was made originally to Christ, *to him and to his heires*; that is, those which should beleeve in his Name; so that the promises have made so far an influence upon us as Christ hath; and they had no other upon the Jews. But yet for the true understanding of the promises, it must further be understood, that there were some promises only made

Ruther. Triall of Faith, p. 52, 53, 54. *Mr Rutherfords anſ.* Reasons to prove the Covenant and Promises were made to Christ for us.

a b

Acts 11.26.

to the Perſon of Chriſt, and not to deſcend to his children, as that *Phil.* 2 9,10,11. and *Heb.* 1.5,13. and *Iſa.* 53.10. *Pſal.* 110.2. *Pſal.* 2.8,9. There are other promiſes which are made *To him and his*, even as there is a difference in bonds; ſome run only to the perſon of the man, others run *to him, his heires, executors, adminiſtrators or aſſignes*: And firſt (ſaith Mr *Rutherford*) *I will be thy God*; *The mother-Promiſe* is made to him, *Pſa* 89.16. *Joh.* 20.17. and to his people too, *Jer.* 32.38. *Zach.* 13.9.

And *ſpeciall promiſes* (ſecondly) are made *firſt to him*, and then *in proportion to us*, as grace to him is promiſed, and in proportion to us, *Jer.* 32.39. *Ezek.* 36.26,27. *Joh.* 1.16.

2. *Juſtification is promiſed to him* (not perſonall, but of his cauſe, as Mr *Rutherford* diſtinguiſhes) *Iſa.* 50.8. and *juſtification of our perſons to us*, *Epheſ.* 1.7. *Jer.* 31.32,33.

3. *Victory and dominion is promiſed to him*, Pſal. 110. 12. 1 Cor. 15.25. *and to us*, Joh. 16.11. 14.30.

4. *The Kingdom and Glory is promiſed to him*, *Phil.* 2.9,10 *and to us*, Luk. 12.32. Joh. 17.24.

5. *For his reſurrection after three daies*, Pſal. 6.10,11. *to us after a longer time*, Joh. 11.26. 6.38,39. For theſe things more fully I ſhall refer you to Mr *Rutherfords Tryall and Triumph of Faith*, p. 55,56. So that you ſee clearly, that whatſoever promiſes were made to the Jewes, either to the Church, or to the perſons of the beleeving Jews, are to be applyed to us, becauſe they were primarily and originally made with Chriſt, to whom we have as great a title, and in whom we have as great a ſhare as they have. And that is the ſecond rule to help you for the cleare underſtanding of the Promiſes; I will adde but one more, which together with theſe will meet with all miſtakes, which in my little experience I have met with in troubled Spirits con-

concerning the understanding of the Promises.

Thirdly, that is this, *though some promises are conditionall, yet none require of us a fulfilling of the conditions by our own strength.* This is that which troubles many poor soules, and is a great bar to their faith, and staves them off from applying the of Promises: *O but I cannot fulfill the conditions of the Promise; I cannot be heavy laden, and weary; I cannot hunger and thirst,* &c. I told you before what promises were ordinarily proposed conditionally in Scripture, *viz.* Promises of second mercies in order to our salvation, as the promises of justification, ease, peace, which follow after vocation, *Rom.* 8.30. *Ho, every one that thirsteth,* &c. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall be satisfied,* Mat. 5.6. Now here doth many a poore soule stand. *Alas* (saith a poor Christian) *I perish, I perish;* We say to the soule in such a complaint, Hark what Christ saies, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you,* Mat. 11.29. And againe, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eate,* &c. *Incline your eare and come unto me; heare and your soule shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David,* Isa. 55.1.3. And againe, Isa. 1.16,17,18. *Wash you, make you cleane, put away the evill of your doings before mine eyes; cease to do evill, learne to do well. Come now and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though as crimson, they shall be as wooll.* But now the Christian not clearely understanding the nature and vertue of these promises, cannot make a particular application of them to its soul, it stands off and cannot make a particular application. *Alas* (saith the Christian) *these are made upon condition of a wearinesse, and an heavy load, of hungring and thirsting, of coming, of washing and clensing, of putting away the evill of my doings, of ceasing to do evill, and learning*

3.

Isa. 55.1,2. Mat. 11.29.

to do well: Hard ſayings, Who can heare them? I cannot get my heart to hunger and thirſt, I cannot get my heart to bee weary and heavy laden; A Leopard can as well cleanſe himſelfe of ſpots, and an Ethiopian as well waſh away the blackneſſe of his skin, as I can waſh my blacke ſoule, &c. *One that hath no legs can as well walk to Rome, as I can come to Chriſt.* But know Chriſtian, thy particular applying faith here is hindered by a meere miſunderſtanding of the promiſe; for though thoſe promiſes require conditions, yet they require not conditions to be fulfilled in thy ſtrength; but thoſe required conditions are as well parts and branches of the free covenant of Grace, as thoſe promiſes which thou deſireſt to apply; therefore you ſhall find promiſes for the fulfilling thoſe conditions in thy ſoule: God requires a wearineſs of ſin, and a loathing of ſin, and a ſorrow for ſin, as a condition, *Mat.* 11.29. *Iſa.* 55.1.3. *God promiſeth* to give this ſelfe-abhorring frame of Spirit, and to work this loathing in his peoples ſoules, *Ezek.* 6.9,20,43,36. *chap.* 31. *Zach.* 12.10. *God requires* waſhing and cleanſing as a condition, *Iſa.* 1.16,17,18. *He hath promiſed* to work this in the ſoule, Chriſt tels *Peter* he would do it. *Joh.* 13.8. And *David* praies that God would do it for him, *Pſa.* 51.2.7. which prayer was grounded upon a promiſe; and this waſhing is attributed to God as the working of his ſpirit; *Iſa.* 4.4. *When the Lord ſhall have waſhed away the filth of the daughters of* Sion, *and ſhall have purged the blood of* Jeruſalem *from the midſt thereof, by the ſpirit of judgement, and the ſpirit of burning,* God requires turning, and coming, and learning, and leaving ſin, as a condition, but he hath promiſed to fulfill theſe, *Hoſ.* 14.8. but he hath ſaid, *None can come unleſſe the Father draw him, Joh.* 6.44. and the Spouſe without queſtion grounding her prayer on a promiſe, ſaith, *draw me, Cant.* 1.5. He hath *required turning* as a condition, *Ezek.* 33.11. *Jer.* 3.14. but hee hath *promiſed to worke this in the ſoule,*

Mat.

Mat. 4.6, and upon this the Church praies, *Jer.* 31.18. *Turne thou me and I shall be turned:* So that this is a certaine rule, *God requires no condition of a promise which he hath not promised to fulfill in us*; And whatsoever spirituall action is any where required of us as a duty, he hath some-where promised to bestow upon us as a dispensation of free Grace. Therefore I would have the soule in such a condition, when it stumbles at the condition of a promise, seeke out those promises where God promiseth to fulfill those conditions in it, and particularly apply them, and rely upon God for making them good, and direct its prayers accordingly. So I have done with the first thing required in the soule for the particular application of the promises, *viz.* a cleare understanding of the promises, for which I have given three Rules; Now in regard that at all times there may bee in a true beleeving soule a cleare understanding of the promises: I conclude there may be true faith in the soule that at all times cannot make a particular Application; But I hasten to

2. The second thing, which is requisite in that soule that doth truly rely, or that can particularly apply the promises, and that is *a cleare understanding of its own condition*; for how can I truly and particularly apply a promise to the wound of my Soule, when I do not understand truly what wound my soule hath? Now a true believing soule may have a very false estimate of its owne condition: Thus had *David* and *Asaph*, and the Church, they thought they were cast off. *Psal* 43.2. *Psal.* 44.9. *Psal.* 60.1. *Psal.* 74.1. 77.7. 89.38. If I think that a part of my body is gangrened, I will never apply Physick to it, because I know it is in vain: So, so long as the Soule conceives that its condition is irrecoverable, its sins unpardonable, that applying promises to it is but applying warm clothes to a dead man; it will never apply. Now such a temper may be in the beleeving soule, occasioned by

by the violent temptations of Sathan, by darke clouds of melancholly, or the like: it apprehends its ſins not pardonable, or at leaſt not pardonable as yet to the ſoule. O! (ſaies the ſoule) *I have ſinned againſt the holy Ghoſt, what good will it do to me to apply promiſes? I am damned.*

It is a temptation which Sathan ordinarily firſt or laſt troubles beleeving ſoules with: I have anſwered that caſe of Conſcience particularly, and therefore ſhall not enter into a particular diſcourſe of it now. Now till the ſoule be brought ſo far truly to underſtand its owne condition, that its wounds are curable, and to cry unto God for the healing and cure of them; it cannot be expected that it ſhould particularly apply any Promiſes, as plaiſters for the healing; and in regard I ſay that there may be ſome misjudging of the ſoules true eſtate in a gracious ſoule, there may alſo be a want of this peculiar faith; It is true, it is given by all ſober Divines as the leaſt degree of Faith to beleeve that my ſins are pardonable, and to run and fly, and cry unto God for a pardon of them: but yet through the diſtemperature of the ſoule, even this thing, that the ſoules ſins are pardonable, which is generally beleeved, and is the ſoules foundation upon which ground it humbles it ſelfe, and cries, and praies, may not be beleeved by the ſoule that yet hath true faith, or at leaſt beleeved very darkly, and with a great deale of doubting.

3 The third and laſt thing which I will inſtance in, which muſt be found in that ſoule that ſhall particularly apply a generall promiſe as its particular portion, *is a conſtant wonderfull working of the powerfull Spirit of God upon the ſoule:* For let a ſoule never ſo truly underſtand its own condition, and never ſo truly underſtand the vertue of the promiſe, and never ſo fully conceive that the promiſes have an adeqnate proportionable vertue for the healing of its particular wounds; yet unleſs the ſpirit of God by a wonderfull powerfull worke of

grace

grace doth lay the salve upon the sore, and apply the promise unto the soule, it cannot be done; as it is with a man that hath lost his hands, on the use of them, and suppose him to have a sore in his back; let him never so truly understand the nature of his disease, and the vertue of the salve with which the Plaister is spread that is to be applied to the sore, hee is not able yet to apply it and lay it on for cure; the hand of the Chirurgion, or some other for him must do this; So it is with the Soule, *Rom.* 8.16. *The Spirit it selfe must beare witnesse with our spirits, that we are the children of God*: now unlesse that be witnessed, we have nothing to do with the promise; the children of the promise must be the children of God; and in being his children, they become heires of the promise, as the Apostle disputes, *Gal.*3. It is a sweet and remarkable expression of *David* to this purpose, *Psa.*119. v.49. *Remember the word unto thy servant upon which [thou] hast caused me to hope.* It is God and his spirit that must cause us to hope and trust in his Word: Now in regard that the Saints and Servants of God may, though they alwaies have the Spirit dwelling in them, yet sometimes have the Spirit not so fully and powerfully acting in them the strong and powerfull actings of the Spirit, it being the effects of Gods manifestive love which may be more or lesse in a Christian, though his elective love admits of no degrees: I say, in this regard I conceive a Christian may have true saving Faith, and yet not for the present at all times be able to apply the promises with a particular Faith as its own proper and peculiar portion. And now you have heard the reasons, which may be reduced shortly thus:

Rom.8.16.

Psal.119.49.

1. Because there may be a misunderstanding or a clear ignorance of the vertue of the promises, which must be understood before they can be particularly applyed.

2. Because there may bee a misunderstanding of the soules condition: it may say there is no hope, and judge its wounds incurable.

3 Because there may want such a constant powerfull working of the Spirit of God in the soule as must be joyned with the soules peculiar application, and yet there may be true faith.

For the first, I conceive *the particular applying of the promise with a confidence, they are my portion, doth argue a sense of faith, which may not be in the soule, and yet true faith be in it.*

Secondly, *Because as a man must not be judged to be no man, because he wants his power to act reason in a Feaver; So the estimate of the truth of Faith that is in the soule, must not be taken in the distemperature of the soul;* when under heavy temptations; or darke and melancholly apprehensions; or over-pressing afflictions; or sad desertions.

Thirdly, *Because there is a difference betweene resting out of a principle of hope, which argues only a reliance, and dependance,* and out of a principle of certainty and perswasion, applying. The truly beleeving soule, when out of desertions, and from under temptations, and not burthened with afflictions and melancholly, doth alwaies apply the promises with an application of hope; it hopes they belong to it, though not alwaies with an application of perswasion; now the application of hope and the resting out of a principle of hope, provided there be an acting accordingly, is enough to save, *Rom.* 8. 24. *We are saved by hope,* 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *Col.* 1. 27. But yet this we must not rest in, but labour for a full perswasion, *the full assurance of hope,* Heb. 6. 11. Thou mayest *apply thy selfe to the promise,* when thou canst not *apply the promise to thee:* But of this more in the next Sermon.

For hope which is seen is no hope. Rom. 8. 24.

But our hope must be lively. 1 Pet. 1. 3. 4.

SERM.

SERM. XIII.

MAR. 9. 24.

Lord I beleeve, help thou my unbeleefe.

CHAP. II.

Concerning those weaknesses that may accompany the highest act of faith, viz *Assurance: And how to satisfie the soule that scruples its faith, because it cannot be assured at all, or weakly and unconstantly.*

MY subject is to discover what doubts and weaknesse may be in relation to the last and highest act of Faith in a gracious soul; for there is nothing more ordinary then to heare such complaints as these from a gracious soule: *Alas! never tell me of faith, I have no opinion at all that ever I shall be saved; never did poore soule live at such incertainties; I pray, I look upward, I desire, I faint, I groan, I swoon, and yet not a drop of cordiall*

water of perſwaſion that my Chriſt will afford me to revive my dying ſpirit: or if I do ſometimes catch up a perſwaſion in my ſoule, and come to think that I have an intereſt in God, it is but a bare thought, and ſo weake, that it is ſcarce able to ſtand a day; ſometimes indeed for a day, or a week, or a month together, I could bleſſe my ſoule in a good condition; but then againe, I am as full of doubts and fears; and is there any certainty in this faith? Am I not like a wave of the Sea, toſt about with thouſands of winds? One while I think I am ſure of heaven and glory, and am as it were wrapt up into a third heaven, and the diadem of glory is fitting on to my head: another while I am thrown down to hell, and me thinks every Devill is tracing me. I will (with the help of my God) endeavour to ſatisfie thee, and ſhew thee what weakneſſe may conſiſt with this act, and in relation to this act of Faith, in theſe enſuing Concluſions.

Conclu. 1. *Thou maieſt have a true and certaine faith, and ſuch a one as will ſtrongly ſave thee, and yet have no aſſurance of thy ſalvation.* Indeed, my ſeverall Sermons that I preacht upon this ſubject, do all concurre to the proofe of this truth; for if a Chriſtian may have ſaving Faith, and yet ſo much weakneſſe and doubting conſiſt and be contemporaneous with it in the ſoule, it will neceſſarily follow, that Aſſurance is not the *minimum quod ſic*, the leaſt degree of ſaving Faith. But now it lying in my way, I ſhall ſpeake ſomething more diſtinctly to it. There are Opinions on the right hand and on the left concerning this ſublime act of our Faith.

1. *The Papiſt denies any poſſibility of Aſſurance*, and reviles that pretious Doctrine as licentious; and pleads only for a generall faith, to beleeve the hiſtory of the Word, and the Articles of Faith, &c.

2. *The Antinomians on the other ſide deny any Faith to be true faith that is accompanied with any kind of doubting*; a full aſſurance they will make the *minimum quod*

ſic,

sic, the least Faith that can help a man to heaven. Some Reverend Writers living near the time of the reigne of that Popish Doctrine, denying any thing of perswasion to come into the nature of true saving Faith, and setting themselves in full opposition to it, have not a little (though unwillingly) contributed to the last opinion, defining faith *to be a perswasion of the pardon of our sins, and of a pardon past and done*, &c.

I have already shewed you, that the essence and marrow of justifying Faith consists in the soules receiving of, and rolling it selfe, and relying upon God for eternall salvation, not in the soules assurance that God is its God; in the soules goings out, not in its comings in; in its direct act, not in its reflect act; And therefore our Divines make a distinction betwixt a soules *application of its selfe to the promise*, and *a soules application of the promise to it selfe*; and grant that there may be in the soul a certainty of Faith in respect of the Object, though not an assurance of Faith in respect of the Subject. We will a little enquire how perswasion comes into the nature of justifying Faith. There is a double distinction, which I have noted before, and shall here repeat, would be observed concerning this perswasion.

First, there is a difference betwixt a *Perswasion*, and a *beleeved Perswasion*, or a *full Perswasion*.

Secondly, there is a great deale of difference betwixt a *Perswasion eying the future*, and *relating to the present*; There may be in a gracious soule a perswasion, though he saies he is not perswaded; There is a great deale of difference betwixt *Faith*, and the *Sense* and *feeling of Faith*, as I shall shew you more hereafter.

Secondly, there may be in a soule a certaine perswasion, though not a full perswasion: In all Faith there is a perswasion, but in all Faith there is not a full perswasion; the word in Scripture translated full perswasion is Πληροφορία, *Rom.* 4. 21. It is said that *Abraham* was fully per-

perswaded, it is but in opposition to doubting of unbeliefe, being so, saith the Text, *He staggered not through unbeliefe*, and so *Rom.* 14. *Let him that eateth be fully perswaded*, that is, so perswaded that he doth not eate with any scruple of mind, or doubting of spirit; I may be perswaded of a thing that yet I am not fully perswaded of, but have some doubts of; yet when my reasons for the affirmative are more than for the negative, my mind begets a perswasion, and enters a perswasion in my soul from the major vote of reason; Now I cannot be said to be fully perswaded, unless my soule runs without a rub: as it is ordinary amongst us, when we are informed by credible witnesses of such a thing done, wee may bee perswaded it is true, and really beleeve the truth of it, and yet will not sweare it, and perhaps shall have scruples and doubts, unlesse we saw it our selves, *&c.* So a Christian may be perswaded that Gods love is towards him, but till he feeles it as well as thinks it, he will hardly have πληροφορίαν a full perswasion without any manner of doubts or scruples concerning it.

Againe, *There is a great deale of difference betwixt a perswasion for the present, and a perswasion for the future*: I am forced to put it in these Termes for want of other; I meane betwixt an assurance that my sins are actually pardoned, and a perswasion that they are pardonable, and decretally and meritoriously pardoned, and I shall feele at last the seale of Gods love; I must speake here according to the manner of men: it is true it may sound harshly, that a Christian should beleeve only that God will pardon his sins, and will justifie him, I know there be some learned and pretious men that hold that the elected soule is pardoned, and formally justified before he believes, and so would make our justification, (as Master *Burgesse* saith wittily) nothing *but the fetching a Copy out of the Court-roll*; but I am of his mind in his late Treatise of Justification, *Page* 178. where hee gives

gives several Arguments against this Opinion, As,

First, *If it bee so, then all the Elect were then made blessed and happy, their sins not being imputed, contrary to* Eph. 2. 3.

Secondly, *Because this Doctrine would make justification only to be declarative; when the Scriptures tell us that our sins are charged upon us till we beleeve.*

Thirdly, *Because Christ cannot as an head represent those that are not his members: now before actuall beleeving we are no members of Christ*; Indeed meritoriously and vertually our sins are pardoned before we believe, and our souls are justified before we beleeve: but I (with him) cannot see how we are formally and actually justified before we beleeve: and to his Arguments give me leave to add a fourth.

See the Arguments against this answered in M. *Burgesse* his Treatise of justification, *p.* 180, 181.

Fourthly, *Pardon of sin and justification, it is an acquitting of the guilty soule before God for the righteousnesse of another; now how the soule should be actually acquitted before it be actually and formally guilty, I cannot understand*: And therefore I say, a soule may be perswaded that its sins are pardonable, and shall be pardoned, and accordingly truly rely upon the Lord Jesus Christ for the pardon of them, which is true Faith, though it cannot be fully perswaded that its sins are pardoned. And thus much may briefly serve to have noted how far perswasion and assurance necessarily come into the nature of true and saving Faith, and how not: And concerning it I shall only nominate these conclusions to you, as containing the whole truth concerning it.

First, *That a Christian may have saving Faith, though he cannot be fully perswaded that God hath actually pardoned and blotted out his sins, and formally justified him*; for a beleeving that my sins are formally pardoned, is to beleeve I am justified, and is the Faith of a justified person, not justifying Faith (properly so called.)

Secondly, *That a Beleever may have true saving faith, though*

though hee could never yet at all bee perswaded that God had actually and formally justified his soule by pardoning his sins. This is still the application of the promise to the soule, and a reflex act of Faith which conduceth more to the soules comfort than its formall justification.

Thirdly, *That a Christian may have true justifying Faith; though he cannot at all times be fully and unquestionably perswaded that God will pardon his sins;* a rationall man in a Feaver may have lost his actings of reason, though while he hath the being of a man, reason hath a being in him; the tongue may bely the heart when the actions cleare it; A Christian may be at *Will God pardon me* with his tongue, when his heart really thinks he will, and he manifestly shews it by crying, fasting, fearing to sin, lying groveling at the doore of free grace.

Fourthly, *That a Christian cannot have true saving justifying Faith, unlesse he doth (I do not say, unlesse hee thinke he doth, or unlesse he saies he doth, but unlesse hee doth) beleeve, and is perswaded that God will pardon his sins:* it is easily perceived by its resolving not to leave crying, praying, walking holily and circumspectly, that it is perswaded in this particular, that it is best both simply and in comparison to draw neere to God, and rely upon his grace, and so in event (saith Mr *Ball*) is sure of salvation, and yet would give a world to be assured of Gods favour, and fully perswaded that its sins are pardoned.

Ball upon Faith, *p.* 82.

Fifthly, *That it is false that the Papists say, no particular assurance ought to be looke for, or may be procured,* it may bee procured, and it ought to be sought for; this might easily be proved: but I shall not meddle with it, it being not my worke, and it being a question would take up a great deale of time: but I shall rather refer him that doubts of this to those learned men that have sufficiently managed this quarrell against the Papists.

Willets Synopsis Papismi, *p.* 974, 975.

Perkins 3. vol. 220. 2. d. 1. vol. 542. 2. b. 542. 1. c. 564. 1. d. 543. 1. d.

Ball

Ball upon Faith, 1 *Part. ch.* 8.*p.*79,80,81. *Downams* Warfare.*part.*1.*l.*2.*c.*8.*p.*102. §.2.*p* 103. *col.* 1.30.104. §.6.*c.*9.*p.*106.*part.*1.*l.*2.*c.*11.*p.*118.*cap.*13.*p.*117.§ 1. *cap.*14.*c.*11. and many others who have largely discussed this point, and maintained this truth.

Sixthly and lastly, *It is as false that the* Antinomians *and* Libertines *hold, that without this well-grounded full perswasion, there is no faith in the Soule*; this a learned Writer of our owne in severall parts of his Booke hath made out against them; Thou maiest have true saving faith, though for the present thou canst not be fully perswaded that thy sins are pardoned: yea though thou mayest think that they are not pardonable (through some accidentall temptation over-powring thee, or some corruptions hindring the actions of Faith;) yet thou maiest be perswaded that they are pardonable, and at that time it will appeare to all the world that thou art perswaded they shall be pardoned to thy soule; by thy fearing to offend God, and thy carefulnesse to please him, by thy crying, fasting, weeping, lying at the feet of divine grace, and resolving if thou perishest, to perish at the gate of heaven, and meet with hell there if thou meetest with it any where; Nay, be not mistaken, this thy Faith is 1 certaine, and 2 strong, as well as saving. *Rutherfords* Christs dying for sinners, v. codicem.

First, *It is saving*, That I have already shewed you, when I fully shewed you that the essence and pith of justifying Faith was a receiving of the Promise, and a fiduciall rolling our selves, and hanging upon the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon. Now as it is saving, 1.

Secondly, *so it is strong*; That Faith (saith a precious Author) is argued to be strong that hath no light of comfort, but walks in darknesse upon the margin and borders of an hundred deaths. *Davids* Faith was a strong Faith, when though all Gods waves were upon him, yet he *called upon God daily*, *Psa.*88.7,8,9. when the soule is so far from being perswaded that it is a lovely 2.

one in the Lords eyes, that it conceives it ſelfe a damned wretch in the Lords ſight, and only ſees a ſparkling light in at a crevis of the window, and by a little pinhole, a beame of hope comes in, and it thinks, well, my ſins are yet pardonable, yet I dare not ſay there is no hope: yet I know not what to thinke, my ſins are great Goale-ſins, I am perſwaded that if my name be in the Charter of grace, it is in the bottome, and it is ſometimes ready to thinke that the little glimmering of light it ſees, is rather the counterfeiting light of a Glow-worme than the triumphing light of the Sun: yet the ſoule is raviſhed with that particle of light, and goes and kiſſeth the hole that gives it a paſſage, and ſaies, well, here's all my comfort, my ſins are yet pardonable. I ſee the ſhip of my ſoule is wrackt; poſſibly this bit of board may ſave my life, I will on to it, If I periſh I periſh; I will not loſe this pin-hole light, I will cry, faſt, weep, and pray; Lord, ſay my ſins are pardoned, I am perſwaded thou canſt pardon them, and if thou wilt, thou canſt make me cleane; Lord! here will I lie, filthy, bloody, full of ſores at the Poole of *Bethesda*, I will not ſtir a ſtep from the Poole, I will lie in the way till thou haſt cured me. I ſay, this doth argue a ſtrong faith; the perſwaded aſſured ſoule hath cables of comfort, who would feare the breaking of them? God doth not rap his fingers ſo often as this poore ſoul; This Beleever hath but a twine thread to hang upon; yet he catcheth hold, and ſaies, this ſtraw ſhall beare my ſoules weight; yea, God raps off his fingers often, his life is full of doubts and feares, yet he holds and will not ſtir a ſtep; doth it not argue a great reliance? The woman of *Canaan* had no aſſurance of Chriſts favour, *Mat.* 15.21. ſhe cried, *he anſwered her not a word*, v. 23. nay, when ſhe made friends to him, he will neither heare her nor her friends Mediation, (though they were Chriſts own Diſciples) ſtill ſhe comes and worſhippeth him, he chides her; (this yet argued no aſſurance) ſhe

ſhe replies; he ſaies, *Great is thy faith*, v. 28. Mr *Rutherford* noteth ſweetly upon that, that *the fewer Externals that faith needeth, the ſtronger it is within; little evidence, much adherence ſpeaketh a ſtrong faith.* Now though that perſwaſion bee an inward worke, yet the grounds are externals; for the ſtrength or weakneſſe of perſwaſion is moved by the compaſſe of ſenſe: the leſſer my grounds are, if my adherence be the ſame, the ſtronger is my faith; if I will truſt my friends little finger as much as his whole hand, doth it not the more argue my confidence in his ſtrength, and my reliance upon him, that hee will do what he can to hold me? Oh! it is a ſweet thing to ſee a ſoul hang upon Chriſts little finger, that only apprehendeth a generall promiſe, and is perſwaded that its ſins are pardonable, and ſometimes doubts of this too; yet it cries, and hangs, and weeps, and relies, and ſcornes to lay its little finger upon any thing elſe, any ſelfe-ſufficiency, any creature-righteouſneſſe to beare it up; it argues a ſtrong faith: O ſoule, be not deceived! Great is thy faith; nay, and ſuch a *faith may be certaine too*, thou maieſt live at uncertainties upon a certaine faith: The bruiſed reed is not broken, the ſmoaking flax is not quenched, thy faith is doubly certaine, though thy life of faith be full of incertainties.

1. It *is certaine in reſpect of the Object.*

2. It *is certaine in reſpect of the Event.*

1. *In reſpect of the Object:* A weake faith doth not argue weakneſſe in Free-grace, or weak efficacy in the blood of a pretious Jeſus; the pur-blind eye doth as certainly ſee the Sun as he whoſe eyes are beſt, the weake pur-blind-eyed ſoule doth certainly ſee, apprehend, and relie upon Chriſt, though not ſo clearely and comfortably.

2. *Thy faith is certaine in reſpect of the Event*: Even as every thing that hangeth upon a pin or a peg, is as ſure as the pin or peg on which it hangeth: So that ſoule

that hangs upon the mercy and Free-grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the rocky promiſes of Salvation, is as ſure as the promiſe, *&c.*

And thus I thinke I have ſufficiently cleared the firſt thing, that a Chriſtian may have a true ſaving Faith; yea, and ſuch a one as ſhall be ſtrong and certaine, both in reſpect of the Object and Event, that yet hath not this ſublime act of Faith, which is aſſurance. I haſten to a ſecond Concluſion, and all the reſt of my Propoſitions with reſpect to a full perſwaſion that our ſins already are actually and formally pardoned.

2 Concluſ. *Thy aſſurance and perſwaſion that thy ſins are pardoned, may bee a true perſwaſion and aſſurance, though but weak; or to ſpeak more properly, you may have this reflex act of faith, and be perſwaded that your ſins are pardoned, and this perſwaſion may be a true reflex act of faith, and yet not conſtant in degrees.* Sometimes it may be weaker, ſometimes ſtronger. I call the weakeſt perſwaſion wrought in the ſoule, that its ſins are pardoned, a reflex act of Faith; for I do not think that it is a piece of Faith neceſſary to the juſtification of a ſoule, that it ſhou'd beleeve that its ſins are really and actually pardoned, though it be a beam of grace that the ſoul ſhould love, and looke after more then the world; and it is, and ought to be more pretious to a beleeving ſoule, than all the rocks of Gold, or mountaines of Silver, or beds of Spices, or ten thouſand rivers of Oyle; yet I ſay, I do not take it to be an act of juſtifying Faith, but of the juſtified ſoule. Now this may be true in the ſoule, though it be ſometimes weaker, and ſometime ſtronger; That ſoule that all times is perſwaded that its ſins are pardoned and actually remitted, is not alwaies alike perſwaded of it. It is a beame of Gods manifeſtative love which admits of degrees. As upon the earth, in the day-time there is alwaies ſome light, though through ſome interpoſition of clouds the light is not alwaies alike; ſo in Chriſti-

Christians that the Lord hath brought to this degree that they do really beleeve that their sins are pardoned, though through the sun-shines of Gods manifestative love upon their souls, they for the most part think so, yet they are not alwaies alike perswaded of it. I do verily beleeve that *David* generally was in this temper; and who so perules his pretious Book of Psalmes, will find that he takes the pardon of sins for granted; yet who so againe perules the severall Psalmes, will easily perceive that *Davids* perswasion was not always alike, as any one may see by comparing, *Ps.*6. and *Ps* 41. *ver.* 11. you shall find him in some Psalms altogether singing, and praising, and triumphing, not a mention of a tear; but in others, declaring perswasion, yet wants; expressing confidence, yet teares; as in that sixth Psalme, *ver.* 1,2,3,4. compared with *ver.*9. Sometimes the heavens are so cleare to gracious soules, that the shinings of grace dazzle their soules so much, that nothing will satisfie them but heaven; *Now Lord let thy servant depart in peace*; O that now I might dye and be incorporated into glory! they are so wrapt into the third heavens, that they cannot speake their joy; another while it is lower water with their soules; the Moones influence is not as it was. *David*, I am confident, would have been glad of an errand to have sent him out of the world to heaven, *Psal.*34. But the good man againe in the 39 Psalme, praies as heartily for his life, as any poore wretch could have done, that lay under an apprehension of a past sentence of hell against him, 1 *Pet.*1.8. we reade of a rejoycing, with which beleevers should rejoyce, even with *joy unspeakable*, but there was not such a constant overflowing and full tide of joy alwaies sure. It is a sure note, that manifestative love hath its degrees, and it is from a strong influence of Gods manifestative love to the soule, that the soul hath such a perswasion; now had I leasure, I might at large here tell you, at what times commonly

the spring-tide of assurance flowes highest, and on the contrary, what may make the apprehension weaker, and at what times it is ordinarily most weak.

1. 1. *Commonly just upon Gods returne after a long desertion and sad expectation, the soules assurance is very great, and its perswasion very high:* God turns mid-night into mid-day: The soule then brings the Lord Jesus Christ into *her mothers house, into the chambers of her that conceived her:* commonly when the husband comes home, after a long absence and long expectation, more then ordinary tokens of love, and passages of love are discerned betwixt him and the wife of his bosome; Christ comes in then to make amends for his frowns and lowrings, with the sweetest kisses and imbraces: Mid-winter is turned into a Mid-summer, this you shall find constantly in *Davids* Psalms; and so on the contrary, when the soule is under desertions, if there be left yet a perswasion, that though God doth hide his face, yet he doth not hide his heart, yet it is but a weak and just living perswasion.

2. 2. *And commonly at greatest distresse, God comes in with strongest perswasions and fullest assurance*; as when the Christian is cal'd to Martyrdom, or cal'd to dye, or cal'd to do any great services, that it distrusts its owne strength, and is ready to feare or faint, that nothing but the most reviving, quick, and hot cordiall water can keep the soule alive, and able to undergo that great and extraordinary service that God cals for at his hands; ordinarily now at such times, the Lord is pleased to come in with a fulnes into the soul. (It was but yesterday you heard by my Reverend Brother, that ordinarily God comes in with signes which are evidences to sense, when the soule is in greatest streights;) and wee shall find that Gods promise made to *Abraham* was often renewed to him, and to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*; but the diligent Reader shall observe, that God pickt out that time, or those

those times when hee called his Saints to some hard work in doing, of which their hearts might sink concerning the Lords promise. The originall promise was in *Gen.*12.7. it was renewed to him, *chap.* 13. *vers.* 15. when hee was to go out of the land, hee scarce knew whither, and leave it to others to possesse; and to *Isaac* when he went to *Gerar*, *Gen.*26.4. and to *Iacob* going downe to *Egypt*, *Gen.*46.4. At such times the children of God are to do double work, and had need of double strength, and so a double subsistence; when *Eliah* was to go in the strength of his meat forty daies, he had need eat a good meale; the Angell therefore twice admonished him, to *arise and eate*, 1 *Kings*, 19.6,7. The journey was great which he had to go, the frequent Stories of the Martyrs make this good; when the Lord cal'd them to their great service at the stake, hee prepared them for their double worke with double comforts, ravishing their soules with glory, *and so often, that God makes many of his deare Saints live upon short commons all their life time, when he brings them to the hard worke of dying, he gives them a glimpse of glory*; This is a note of a pretious Divine, who gives experiences of it, and it is especially when they dye strong torturing deaths; for alwaies it is not seen; it may be they have had all comforts before, and may dye in conflicts; God will try how they can walk in the strength of what they have had, or if they have had no bread till then, God will hardly call them to die without giving them a brust; yet (as he sweetly saith) *God walks in liberty here, and will not have us to limit the breathings of the Holy Ghost to jump with the houre of our dying; for we may make an Idoll of a begun heaven, as if it were more excellent then Christ.* By this you see (in stead of much might be said) that assurances may be weaker and stronger, yet true; and this will be further made good by my last Conclusion, which I will but touch, and that is this:

Rutherford, Trial of Faith.

Con-

Concl. 3. *Thou maiest have had, and againe have a true assurance and full perswasion, and for the present have none at all:* I have spoken so much to this before, that I shall need adde very little: It is necessary to constitute the true direct act of Faith, that it bee a continued act; and that soule never did truly rely at all, that ever since it began to rely ceased to rely; but for a reflex act, it may be wanting even in the soule that hath had it, and may have it againe if God will please to turne his face towards it; nay, I will question whether ever that Christian had true assurance or no, that hath had it, as he pretends, without any intermission; for so long as there remaines a Devill to tempt, or a flesh to allure to sin, there will be sometimes wants of full assurance; yea, if there were none of them both, I would make it a great question, whether the wise God would ever keep such a dispensation of his love in a full Sun-shine to any soule (though loved never so dearely;) I am afraid though we have much talk of Faith, of assurance now adaies in the world, if the Lord should come to sift the hearts of his poore creatures, he would scarce find the mustard-seed Faith of adherence. 1. Overpowring temptations. 2. Overgrowing corruptions. 3. Naturall distempers of Melancholly. 4. Divine desertions shall hinder assurance, and make the act to cease; and judge you then what soule it is probable shall have it an incessant constant act. But I have done with this last thing, and now I have shewed you what doubts and weaknesses may consist with every act of Faith in a truly gracious soule.

SERM.

SERM. XIV.

LUK. 17. v. 5.

Lord, increaſe our Faith.

CHAP. 13.

How to comfort that ſoule that thinkes it hath not true Faith, becauſe it doth not feele God ſtrengthning it to thoſe acts of Grace which it ought to act.

I Will take leave here (apprehending it a ſeaſonable place to bring it in,) to ſpeak ſomthing to one ſcruple of conſcience, which doth often perplex many a good Chriſtian; and that is want of feeling of Gods love, &c. *Ah!* (ſaith many a poore ſoule) *did I but indeed know that God and Chriſt were my Redeemer and Portion, then I thinke I ſhould not needbe much intreated to caſt away this ſadneſs and dejection of ſpirit, but I cannot feele any*

such thing. And this makes a Christian think that it neither doth nor may beleeve.

Now there is a double feeling, for the want of which, many good soules often complaine, and upon the want of which they raise to themselves conclusions against beleeving. For want of a distinction I will presume for once to coyne one, *There is a feeling of peace, and a feeling of strength.*

1. The feeling of peace, is, *when a poore Christian apprehends God appeased to its soule, and feels him, saying, I am thy God, the God of thy salvation*; this is that perswasion which is that highest reflex act of Faith of which I spake the last time, and shewed you what degrees and abatements it might meet with in a true Beleever: Now this a true Christian may want, though he doth feele Gods spirit carrying him on to acts of mortification and vivification, *&c.* Of this I shall not speake, having spoken the last time, how far it may be wanted, weakened, or abated, or discontinued, even in Gods true and deare children.

2. But there is another feeling which for distinction sake, I call *a feeling of strength*; when a Christian, though he doth not feele Gods peace sealed up and assured unto his soule, yet he cannot deny but he feeles his soule carryed out by God unto duties, to love him, to desire him, to delight in him, *&c.* Now this latter feeling ought to satisfie the soule, when, though God doth not please as yet to *apply the promise to his soule*; yet hee feeles God enabling him *to apply himselfe to the promise*, when he feels God *changing and renewing his heart and affections*, &c. But here is that which many poore Christians want, and complaine for the want of; they will confesse, that could they but feele God strengthening them against their corruptions, and carrying out their hearts in acts of love, and desire towards him, *&c.* they would quiet themselves, and be very thankfull to him, if

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he would but give them so much of the morsels of Free-grace as would keep spirituall life in them, and keep their hearts from dying for want of mouth-fuls, although God would not yet please to let them sit down at the banquetting table of assurance, and eat of the sweet-meats of that peace which passeth all understanding. If God would please to give them but such sips of his flaggons as might stay them, though they wanted such dishes of apples as to comfort them, it would suffice; but alas! this they want, and how can they beleeve? *&c.*

Now all that I shall speake to a Christian in this perplexity, I will reduce to these two heads:

1. *Something by way of Consolation*: And,
2. *Something by way of Direction.*

First, *By way of Consolation, I should propound these few things, as considerations which may tend through the blessing of God to the comforting of such soules in such streights.*

Consid. 1. *That not feeling, doth not argue anot being:* A thing may be though it be not felt; it is no Logick to infer a negative conclusion from our sense. Sometimes we see not the beames of the Sun; the interposition of the Moon doth hinder us in an Eclipse from beholding its light; yea, darke clouds we see ordinarily will do it; what shall we therefore conclude that the Sun doth not shine? Or that the Sun doth not cast an influence upon the Creatures? This we should call ridiculous. In like manner thou sayest, I do not feele God casting his influence of grace upon my soule, strengthening me against my corruptions, nor so shining upon me with beames of enlivening, quickning grace, my heart is not quick in his service, it is dead unto duties, and dull in them; I do not feele the heat of the Sun of Righteousnesse warming my soule with beames of love, *&c.* therefore wilt thou conclude God doth not do it? The

Pſal.22 v.1.

Pſalmiſt cries out for want of feeling, *Pſ.* 22.1. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me, and art ſo far from my health, and from the words of my roaring?* and ſo he goes on, v.2. *O my God, I cry by day time and thou heareſt not, in the night, and have no audience.* Mark Chriſtian! holy men may ſometimes want feeling; did not God, think you, heare *David?* Had he indeed no audience according to his ſad thoughts? *Ah!* (ſaith a Chriſtian) *but there was ſome comfort, though he did not feele peace, yet he did feele ſtrength*; he felt God enabling him to pray, and cry, and ſeek him; but I cannot feele this. Harke yet once againe to *Aſaph*, *Pſal.*77.v.4. *I am ſo troubled that I cannot ſpeake*, David, *Pſal.*51. v.10,11,12. Hee prayes to God, *to create a cleane heart, and renew a right ſpirit within him*, and v.14. to confirme him *with a free ſpirit*. And yet ſhall we think that at this time *David* had not the ſweet influences of Gods holy Spirit? if ſo, wee are confuted from the foregoing verſe, *Caſt mee not away from thy preſence, take not thy holy ſpirit from me.* By all which it may eaſily appeare that it is one thing not to feele God ſtrengthening and quickning us, and another thing for him not to do it: The working of Gods Spirit within us is very ſecret, according to the nature of the Spirit; we do not feele the ſtars influence upon us, nor yet the actings of our ſoules within us, and yet it is certaine, they have an influence upon us: and that our ſoules do ſubtilly and ſecretly act in all, in every part of our bodies: and therefore ſecondly,

Conſid.2. *That the truth of Gods love to thee in his acting in thee, is not ſo eaſily to be diſcerned in the acting and working of God, as in the effect of ſuch acts and operations*; ſecret acts of ſpirituall ſubſtances are not to be diſcerned and underſtood *in agendo*, but *in effecto*, not in the doing, but when they are done; wee cannot feele the ſouls conveying of its influence and power of working through every part of the body; wee cannot underſtand,

ſtand, or ſee, or feele the time when it doth it, nor the manner how it doth it, *&c.* yet we know it is done, and that is enough for us; thou canſt not ſee nor feele the acting of the vegetative ſoule in the plant, thou canſt not feele how it grows, or ſee when it grows, or underſtand the moment of its ſhooting out, yet thou ſaieſt it doth act; the plant is growne, and the vegetative ſoule in it hath queſtionleſs been the internall principle of its growth. You may poſſibly ſee a man in ſome lethargick diſeaſe, or in a trance, that you ſhall not ſee or diſcerne that his ſoule is yet in his body; you ſhall not diſcerne his pulſe to beat, nor diſcerne him to breath, but all poſſibly in the roome may judge him dead: yet his body keeps ſtill warme, doth not ſtiffen, or grow cold, his eies are not ſet, nor his chap fallen, and poſſibly by applying a glaſs to his mouth you may diſcerne he yet breaths, and lives, and conſequently you may gather the mans ſoule hath not yet taken its leave of the body, for then you know he would grow ſtiffe and cold: and ſo you conclude that his pulſe doth ſtill beat, though ſo obſcurely that you cannot feele or diſcerne it; ſo it may bee with thy ſoule (Chriſtian) the inviſible worke of God in acting his grace in thee, quickning, ſtrengthening thee, moving thee to ſpirituall duties, if thou lookeſt to ſee it, and feele it acting, as thou maieſt feele the beating of thy pulſe upon thy wriſt, thou mayeſt be deceived, it may beat darkely and ſecretly, it is a ſecret work of a ſpirituall ſubſtance; and yet thou mayeſt be comforted in it, if thou wilt but look to the effects: if thy ſoule and body do not grow ſtiffe and cold, and ſtinking with old ſins, and luſts, and baſe corruptions: there is ſome ſpirituall life that keeps thy ſoule warme; though thou canſt not feele Gods ſecret and ſpirituall working in thy ſoule in the very act of warming and quickning thee, and enabling thy ſoule to love him, and deſire after him; yet ſpeake truth, does not thy ſoule love him?

Doeſt thou not delight in him? Doeſt thou not deſire after him? Come let us put a glaſs to the mouth of thy ſoule; here's a baſe luſt and corruption, which if thou acteſt, thou ſhalt bewray the hatred of thy God to all the world; dareſt thou do it wilfully and knowingly? Here is a prophane company that would be glad of thy company; and at the ſame time here's an Ordinance of God, at which if thou wilt bee, thou mayeſt poſſibly ſuck a great deale of ſweetneſſe, and taſte much of thy God: where wilt thou be? Wilt thou baulke thy Communion with God, rather than with prophane and ungodly men? If thou dareſt ſo, it is ſomething; but on the contrary, doth no communion, no company pleaſe thee ſo as the company of the Saints of God? And doth no communion like thee ſo as the communion thou haſt with thy God in his Ordinances? If ſo, thou haſt ſome ſpirituall life in thee; for the dead man hath no ſuch judicious palat; and if thou liveſt a ſpiritual life, it is not thou *that liveſt, but Chriſt that liveth in thee*, and thou liveſt *by Faith in the Son of God*; thus thou mayeſt eaſily diſcerne that in the effects, which thou couldſt not in the working of the cauſe. But *Alas!* (ſaith a poore Chriſtian) *my willing and deſiring is nothing; for though to will be preſent with me, yet I have no ſtrength to performe.* And what *will you make a deſire to beleeve and pray, Faith and Prayer?* I anſwer, "raw deſires and "wiſhes are no more beleeving, than *Eſaus* weeping "for the bleſſing was the bleſſing, or *Balaams* wiſh to "dye the death of the righteous, was the happy end of "ſuch as dye in the Lord. But the ſincere deſires and "good will of juſtified perſons are accepted of the Lord "for the deed; and when Chriſt pronounceth ſuch bleſt "as hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, we ſay in that "ſence, a ſincere deſire to pray and beleeve, is materially "and by concomitancy a neighbour, and neere a kin to "beleeving and praying. A verball and ſeminall intention

Rutherford, p. 142.

" tion to pray, beleeve, love Christ, do his will, is in the " seed of praying, beleeving, *&c.* when the intention is " supernaturall, and of the same kind with the act, as the " seed is the tree: we say not so of naturall intentions " or desires; As *Abrahams* sincere intentions to offer " up his son, was the offering of his son, *&c.* But I go to a third consideration.

Thirdly, *Therefore consider, that feeling at the best is but a deceivable and dissuadable evidence*; oft-times conclusions grounded upon sense are false, and sinke in time. If thou judgest thy condition by feeling, thou mayest oft-times think God doth nothing for thee, though he be at that instant fully enlivening thee, *&c.* And againe, thinke that God is at peace with thee, and that he carrieth thee out to duties, *&c.* when there is no such matter, and it is nothing else but the strength of naturall parts that carrieth thee out, *&c.* *Saul* thought he had a great deale of feeling, 1 *Sam.* 15. 13. when he came to meet Gods Messenger, he cries out, *Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have kept the Commandements of the Lord*; But yet the following part of that story will tell you, that *Saul* was far enough off from any true feeling of peace and comfort: So without question those in *Mat.* 7. 22. judged themselves to have a great deale of feeling of Gods strength, when they had prophesied in Gods name, and in his name cast out Devils, and in his name done many wonderfull works; yet Christ professeth he would say to many such, *I never knew you, depart from me yee workers of iniquity*; thou cryest, thou dost not feele God carrying thee out in duties as many other Christians are, and that which thou callest Gods spirit in them, or in thy selfe, may be no such matter; it is not the courting of God with elegant expressions that argues the strength of God assisting; there is many a stammering non-sence prayer that hath more of the sweet spirit of God in it: there may be a full heart, though. 3.

though it runs not out of the lips ſo faſt, yea oftentimes the fulneſſe of the heart cauſed the ſtraightneſſe of the lips, juſt as the fulneſſe of the veſſell may occaſion the water to run ſlowly out of the hole for want of vent or wind.

The Apoſtle ſaies; that *the Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities, with cries and groanes which cannot be uttered*; it doth not ſay, it helpeth our infirmities *with courtly expreſſions that cannot bee parallel'd*: Thou mayeſt when thou thinkeſt that God carries thee out with more ſtrength and enlargement to duties, call and miſconſtrue that to be the ſtrength and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God, which is occaſioned meerly from thy owne cleareneſſe and naturall ſpirit, when thou art in a little better veine of Rhetorick than thou wert. Miſtake not, there is a diſtinction betwixt *Praying gifts*, and *Praying graces*; I obſerve it is ſaid, *Jacob* wreſtled with God, (by vertue of ſtrength from him.) This is the ſtrength of the ſpirit: the ſpirits worke is not to carry out our tongue in expreſſions, but our heart in zeale and importunity. It is not ſaid that *Jacob ſcraped leggs* with God; no, *he wreſtled*; we are but ill Judges of feeling commonly, which makes feeling but a deceivable and diſputable evidence.

4. Fourthly, conſider, that *no Chriſtian feeleth alwaies alike, yea, perhaps hath no cauſe to feele alwaies alike.* God to the beſt of his deareſt ſervants doth ſometimes meaſure an *Ephah*, and ſometimes but an *Omer*; diſtinguiſh alwaies betwixt *the truth of Gods love to his deare children, and the actings, I mean the viſible actings of his love*; that of God which is not ſeen, is alwaies full and certaine to Chriſtians, I meane his elective love, the yernings of his heart towards his deare children; there is of God alſo that may be ſeene, *Pſal.* 68. 24. *They have ſeen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God in the Sanctuary*; Gods goings in a poore ſoule

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are sometimes very visible to a gracious soule, but sometimes his goings are more secret and invisible, yet he is alwaies going in acts of love and grace to his poore servants, only his goings are more mysterious and darke; God sometimes goes a meere foot-pace, just sets one foot before another in them, and towards them, sometimes he goes faster and more strongly in them, and apparently towards them.

First, *Gods soft going in the soule may sometimes be a cause* why the soule cannot feele. *Peter* had no reason to feele the strength of God alike, when he shamefully denied his Master in the high Priests Hall, as when he durst venture to walk on the Sea towards him. 1.

Secondly, *God withdraws some degrees* of his strength, sometimes to try whether a Christian can stand upon the true legs of Faith, as well as upon the woodden legs of sense; the mother withdrawes her hand sometimes to see how the child can go without trusting to the feeling of her hand guiding and supporting it. 2.

Thirdly, another cause may be in the Christian, why he cannot feele God carrying him out to acts of his grace in his strength alwaies alike; *The soule may possibly have lost its feeling*; the benummed member doth not feele; *In sicknesses and diseases of the body Nature may sometimes be so much infeebled, that sometimes the party affected falls into a dead swound, wherein he is deprived for a time, not only of the use of his understanding, reason, and memory, but also of his sense, motion, and vitall functions.* So it may be with a Christian; sin or the violence of some temptations of Sathan may be such, that the Christian cannot feele any thing; the soule cast into a swound, and deprived of all the spirituall faculties of it, faith, love, life, *&c.* no wonder the soule for the present doth not feele: the leg of the soule is asleep, the whole soule is benummed, how should it feele? but let it alone a little: as such a body (if not quite 3.

dead) will quickly returne to its sense againe and live, and feel, & move, &c. so likewise will the gracious soul quickly come to recover its life, and sense, and motion againe; though the soule seemes (to the judgement of sense) to have no sap or principle of life in it; yet consider it is winter-time with the soule, stay but till the spring and summer, while the frost hath done nipping and discolouring, and the soule will have its sap visible, and recover its beauty againe: there is fire in the soule, though it bee raked up in the night; wait but till the morning that the ashes be blown away, you shall see the fire of Gods spirit is not extinguished in the soule. *I sleep,* (saith the Spouse) *but my heart waketh*: There is a waking heart, though there bee no waking eye, the soule (as well as the body) in sleep is bereaved of sense: wait but till the morning, and the soule will confesse it seeth, and hath recovered its senses againe. Thus for thy comfort know Christian, that thou couldst not justly expect to feele alwaies alike: for first God doth not dispense alwaies alike: and secondly, if he did dispense alwaies alike, yet a benummed, ashy, winter-sleepy soule hath not that beauty, nor that sense, which a lively, healthy, well-tempered, clear-spring awakened soul hath.

5. Fifthly, consider, *That Gods strength may be seen in thee, when it is not seene and felt by thee.* The gracious soule is not alwaies, nay, is very seldome a competent Judge of it selfe; the high Christian may often have a very low, yea, too low an opinion of himselfe; the Christian is his own worst construing Book, and especially too at some times: if *Paul* may be judge of himselfe, sometimes he is *the least of Saints*, and the *chiefest of sinners*, and *unworthy to be called an Apostle*. If *David* may be judge of himselfe, *Psal.* 22. *v.* 6. *He is a worme and no man, yea, the very reproach of men.* So if many Christians may bee Judges of themselves: Alas! *they cannot pray, they cannot love God, they cannot believe,*

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they feele nothing of the strength of God carrying them out; when (if standers-by may bee judges) there is a great deale of the strength of God manifested in their hearts and carriages of their lives, and God is gloriously discovered in carrying out their hearts so gloriously, and sweetly, and firmely for him as hee doth: take a true Christian, and this is a sure rule, *That God, and Gods people have far better opinions of him, than he hath of himselfe*; now this may comfort thee, when other better and more experienced Christians (by thy owne confession) than thy selfe, can see more in thee, than thou canst feele; the body in a dead swound feeles no life in it selfe, but all its vitall motions and functions are hindred: now therefore at such a time, others in the roome are Judges of its life or death, they by observing the warmth of the body, the motions of the pulse, or applying a glasse to the mouth of the swounding person, do perceive life in the man, that to his own sense, and perhaps to the sense of some others is a dead carcasse.

Sixthly and lastly, consider, *That it is no Argument to warrant thee not to beleeve, because thou dost not feele God carrying thee out by his armes of strength in such a manner to spirituall duties, and the acts of spirituall and saving graces as thou desirest, or perhaps expectest*; the reason of this is plaine, *because it is my duty as well to beleeve for strength, as for any thing else*; Sure I am, Gods promises are as much for strength to act grace as for any thing else: and the promises of God are the Object of my Faith; it is my duty to beleeve the promises, *I will strengthen thee* (saith God,) *I will help thee and uphold thee with the hand of my righteousnesse*: thou sayest, this cannot I beleeve. Why? *Because God doth not strengthen me, and help me carry out my heart in an act of Faith*: Thus thou beggest the question; the question is not whether thou oughtest to beleeve when thou feelest God carrying thee on to be- 6.

lieving, *&c.* But whether thou oughteſt not to believe that God will ſtrengthen thee, and carry thee out to acts of beleeving, and loving, *&c.* But ſome may ſay, What doth this differ from Free-will Doctrine? Can I beleeve unleſſe God doth ſtrengthen me to beleeve? Why, do you call upon a man to lay hold, when hee complaineth that he wants hands, or upon a man to walk, when he tels you he cannot find that he hath any legs? Miſtake not Chriſtian; God hath ſaid, *I will ſtrengthen thee, I will help thee, and uphold thee with the hand of my righteouſneſſe:* Now I ſay, it is thy duty to beleeve this promiſe of ſtrength and help, and I confeſſe that it is not in thy power to believe this promiſe, but God muſt ſtrengthen thee, and help thee before thou canſt believe this promiſe that hee will ſtrengthen thee and help thee; but yet I do not call upon one that hath no hands to lay hold, nor upon one that hath no legs to walke, but upon one that ſaith he doth not feele his legs, I call upon him to walke; and I call upon one *that doth not know and feele* that he hath hands to lay hold, *&c.* And this is ſenſe, and warrantable Divinity; Faith is not ſenſible and viſible to a Chriſtian in the habit, but only in the acts, I call to thee to ſhew forth the habit of faith. Now it ſhall not excuſe thee from this duty, that thou canſt not feele thou haſt any habite of Faith; the habite of this pretious grace is inviſible. Thus have I given thee ſome conſiderations, which duly weighed and conſidered, may comfort thy ſoule under this perplexity. I have only one thing more to do, and that is to ſpeake a word or two of direction to ſuch ſoules to ſhew them what to do, that they may be comforted, in which I will be briefe.

2. First, then by way of direction, *Find out the cauſe and remove it*; the cauſes may bee various; I cannot name them all; but the great and ordinary cauſes may be, firſt, Gods will; ſecondly, thy own temper.

1. 1. Gods will; he will not pleaſe perhaps to lead thee with

with ſo ſtrong an arme at one time as at another; hee will try how thou wilt live by faith; ſenſe is bread; he will have thee not to *live by bread only, but by every word that commeth out of the mouth of God.* Now ſenſe and feeling, that is bread; if this be the cauſe (as it was in *Peter*) thou muſt not diſpute but ſubmit to it.

2. *The cauſe may be in thy ſelf*; it may be thou art under ſome violent temptations of Sathan, or under the clouds and darkneſſes of ſome ſins or corruptions, or thy expectation of feeling or ſenſe may be too high, or thou mayeſt be wilfull, and not feele when thou mayeſt. Theſe cauſes muſt be removed by faith, repentance, endeavour, obedience, *&c.* Hath ſin benummed thee? Be humbled for this ſin, and thou ſhalt feele: Art thou in deſertion? beleeve and hope, and thou ſhalt feele again. It is a known maxime, *Take away the cauſe, and the effect will ceaſe.* But 2.

Secondly, *Wait for feeling*; this is a part of thy duty in relation to this want, eſpecially cauſed by Gods will, *Iſa.*40.31. *They that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength like the Eagle*, Pſal.27.14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart*; *wait I ſay on the Lord*: wait with faith, and hope, and patience. 2.

Thirdly, *Learne to live upon Gods word: Man ſhall not live by bread only, but upon every word that commeth out of the mouth of God*: Wee are not to live by faith upon the incertainty of ſenſe: All that that ſpeaks is not Goſpell; but we have a more ſure and certaine livelihood, even the unchangeable goodneſs, and infallible goodneſs of a God that cannot lie nor repent. Senſe is deceiving, truth is infallible; doth ſenſe ſay God doth not ſtrengthen me? and doth Gods word ſay, theſe things I could not do if God did not ſtrengthen me? whether it be now better to believe God, or deceivable ſenſe, judge thou. 3

Fourthly, *Learne to acknowledge Gods little finger*: 4.

thou dost not find God lending his whole hand, perhaps not strengthening thee in such a measure to act grace in such a degree; but know the least stirring of the soule in a spirituall manner to a spirituall action is from God; flesh and bloud could not do it; find out Gods little secret workings, look for these, thou wilt find some of them in thy soule.

Fifthly and lastly, *Act contrary to thy mind:* we bid the sick man eate against his stomack; thou saiest I cannot pray, I cannot beleeve: why? I do not find God giving me a heart to it; do it against thy mind; thou shalt find strength to do it and *comfort* from doing of it.

This learned Mr *Rutherford* gives great reason for; as 1. *Because it is ordinarily seen that a Christian may begin to pray with sad and fleshly complaints of unbelefe, yet going on, the breathing of the Holy Ghost will fill the sailes,* &c. *if we be doing,* the Lord will be with us. 2. *Our indisposition is a sin, and doth not free us from our duty.* 3. *We are to pray against weakneſſe and indisposition, and for strength and freedome of spirit.* 4. *We are commanded in the day of trouble and temptation to pray,* Psal. 50. 15. Mat. 6. 13. 5. *It is a sinfull omission in us not to pray, and act, not to do what we can, though we feele a weakneſs,* &c. and severall other Reasons hee gives, p. 486. 487, &c. Now dost thou not feele the strengthening influence of Gods Spirit carrying thee on to thy duty? yet do it, that is the way to come to have a feeling; *stir up the grace of God that is in thee,* 2 Tim. 1, 6. God complained, *Isa.* 64. v. 7. *That there was none that cal'd upon his name, or stirred up himselfe to lay hold upon him.* It is the ordinary practice of Free-grace, to send in sense and strength upon thy endeavours, yet freely, not as merited by them. And thus I have shortly dispatcht all that I have to say to this scruple of conscience, where the soule complaines for want of feeling, &c.

Rutherford, Christ dying.

The

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FINIS.

Errata.

PAge 4.l.14. for *eighth* read *ſixth*. p.7.l. 34. for *the Chriſtian* r.*thee*; *Chriſtian!* p.16.in marg.for *fidere* r.*fidem*. p. 22. in marg. for *admirandum* r. *admirandam*. p.30.l. 11.for *tract* r.*track*. p.33.l.10.for.*end*. *The* r.*end*. *This is the*.p.38.l.5.for *aceeptation or faith* r. *Acceptation*. p.85.l.2 5. for *the ſoule* r. *thy ſoule*.p.93.in marg. for *συγλυθήσεται* r. *συγλυθήσεται*. p. 110. l.6. for *friends* r. *friend*. p. 110. l. 20. for *minced leſs* r.*minced it to leſs*. p. 138. l. 27. for *eſſentiall and reall* r. *ſpiritual and reall*. p.199.l.16.for *there may be* r.*there may not be*.